

MURRAY'S MAGAZINE. |

NOVEMBER, 1891.

MR. HENRY JAMES.

NO more considerable interest has lately attended the appearance of any play than that excited by the production in a London theatre of Mr. Henry James's dramatic version of his own novel, 'The American.' The reason of that interest is not far to seek. Whatever the merit and the success of our English writers of plays in general, it will not be disputed, we believe, that English literature, in the strict sense of the word, is not, as a rule, greatly enriched by their efforts; when, therefore, it was known that an eminent man of letters, a novelist of the first distinction, had turned his attention to the stage, the event, it was felt, was of an importance to arouse the most legitimate curiosity. It is not our purpose to comment here in any way on Mr. James's work as a dramatist, which, indeed, lies chiefly in the future; but the admirable and lucid style, the command of witty and epigrammatic dialogue with which his readers are already familiar, probably justify the highest hopes of those who care greatly for the renaissance of literary excellence in the English drama. It can be no secret to any one who has studied Mr. James's writings, that he has an almost passionate appreciation of fine plays and fine acting; a hundred passages in his critical work give evidence of his close and careful study of the stage and its requirements, whilst the point, always to be largely insisted on in any consideration of his work as a novelist, that he is a consummate artist, should have no less significance, it may be supposed, in the dramatic world than in that of fiction, as the term is usually understood.

In speaking of the work of Mr. Henry James, the first, the imperative thing to be said about it is that it is the work of an

artist, and of one with a complete and exhaustive knowledge of his art and its resources. Whilst no writer is more vividly modern, Mr. James is, in a sense, an artist as an ancient Greek was an artist; he represses systematically, that is to say, his own personality in view of the work on which he is engaged. By the public, and—shall we say?—by the English public in particular, this supreme quality of workmanship is one of the qualities least esteemed and least appreciated. The generous public hates the Augur's mask; it likes to peep and see the human countenance behind, to shake hands, so to speak, with the wearer, and congratulate him on having a soul like its own. Mr. James never, or by inference only, allows us the smallest peep; his reserve is impenetrable; he invariably treats his characters and his plots with the impartiality of the workman who apprehends that the truth of a thing, and not his own colouring of it, is what, before all, is needed.

We so far share the feeling, whilst absolutely disclaiming any share in the opinion of the public, on this point, as to find a particular pleasure in those *impressions de voyage*, those little sketches of travel collected under the various titles—'A Little Tour in France,' 'Portraits of Places,' 'Foreign Parts'—in which the writer, in the easiest, simplest, most genial manner imaginable, lets us into the secret of his personal impressions, his fine artistic discriminations, his good inns and his bad inns, his chance comrades, his satisfactions and disillusiones. It is the charm of individuality that pervades these charming pages, and which, by the happiest instinct, the author has known how to convey without a touch of obtrusive egotism or fatiguing iteration of detail. It needs indeed but a glance over a hundred dreary and futile *impressions de voyage*, to borrow again that convenient term, to understand the rare and consummate skill that goes to the composition of these little articles in which, without any uneasy self-consciousness or self-assertion, the writer takes us into his confidence, shows us what is best worth seeing and the best way to see it, quotes his guide-book with a humorous guilelessness, and makes himself, in short, through his books, the most delightful travelling-companion in the world.

In putting forward these little volumes first, however, we are not doing Mr. James's work, and what we may imagine to be his own estimate of it, the injustice to rank them amongst his foremost productions. The field of literature that he has traversed is wide; both as critic and essayist he has gained

particular distinction, no less than by the charming papers just mentioned. But it is as a novelist that he has found a foremost place among modern writers ; it is his unique and delightful gift of fiction that, above all, claims consideration in treating of his work.

I.

Every writer of original excellence has one or more distinct lines along which his genius developes itself, and with which he becomes, as it were, identified. Mr. James, as we shall endeavour to show, has that larger outlook on the vast human comedy that distinguishes the great masters of fiction ; but his earliest stories have a certain character in common that intimately connects them with what for convenience has been termed, the International novel. Mr. James, in fact, might not unreasonably claim to be the inventor of that particular form of romance ; and though it would be manifestly unjust to consider him exclusively or even principally in relation to it, since much of his most masterly as well as his most delicate work does not touch on the International question—that is to say, the interfusing influences of America and Europe—at all ; yet there is no doubt that it was his earlier productions, ‘The American,’ ‘The Europeans,’ ‘Daisy Miller,’ ‘An International Episode,’ and half-a-dozen other tales on the same line, that won for him in the first instance much of the wide reputation he enjoys. Mr. James must at some time have studied his countrymen and countrywomen with extraordinary minuteness and detachment of vision. To him might be applied what Sainte-Beuve somewhere says of La Bruyère : “En jugeant de si près les hommes et les choses de son pays, il paraît désintéressé comme le serait un étranger, et déjà un homme de l’avenir.” This disinterested view has, we believe, brought Mr. James into some discredit with a certain section of his compatriots ; the fresh perception and keen insight he has brought to the contemplation of his country and theirs has not always pleased them. They are probably unaware of the debt of gratitude they owe him. It is more apparent to the English mind, which, contrasting its knowledge of America now with what it was some twenty or thirty years ago, perceives how largely, among other causes, Mr. James has contributed to that knowledge ; how clear a light, and how favourable a light, has been thrown upon the subject by his interpretations. This is the more valuable that there can be no suspicion of the author’s impartiality ; that if, as is the fact,

there is in the course of his stories hardly a contest between an American and a European in which the American does not show the finer of the two, it is, we are persuaded, because, given the characters and the circumstances, the American must of necessity show the finer of the two. Nothing, indeed, could be more impossible than to treat Mr. James as even remotely a partisan ; nothing could be further removed from his method, from the large and even glance he turns on one character and another. When he convinces us, it is through his presentment of the truth of things, never through the expression of his personal bias. He himself tells us somewhere that it is his constant habit to tip the balance ; and, if he had not told us, we might have divined it from his work. It is probably a natural quality that he has cultivated to a degree that makes it impossible for him in contemplating a subject seriously to look at it from one point only ; he turns it in his hands, so to speak, as one turns a globe, considering it from every side. This habit of mind is, of course, one of the finest and most essential that a writer can bring to his work ; and if it occasionally exhibits the defect of its quality in carrying disinterestedness to the verge of coldness, it has the supreme merit of leaving the reader's judgment free, of never affronting him by undue insistence on one point to the hindrance of another.

It results naturally from the perfection to which Mr. James has brought this particular method of observation, that the men and women of his tales should have, both physically and mentally, an air of solidity and reality only occasionally attained to in the same degree ; he sees them impartially, he depicts them unerringly, with an extreme delicacy and distinction ; they are set in clear and open daylight, in a perspective as wide, in an atmosphere as free as those of the two continents of which he treats. His characters are types and yet individual ; they belong at once to the universe and to their own epoch ; they have, in short, that combination of the general and the particular that is indispensable to the complete vitality of a creature of the imagination ; and they stand out in a relief that is the bolder, perhaps, that they are, as a rule, provided with little more scenery for their surrounding than is requisite to indicate the local colouring of the story. To Mr. James, we gather from his novels as a whole, life presents itself not pictorially, as a number of pictures, that is, in which human action displays itself against the vast scenic background of the world, not

dramatically, as a succession of scenes culminating in a logical catastrophe (though both these points of view are necessarily included in his scheme of work), but primarily as a series of problems, moral, social, or psychological, to be worked out and solved. An involved situation, a moral dilemma, the giant and complex grasp of society in its widest sense, upon the individual—these and such as these are the problems to the tracing out and solution of which he brings an extreme fineness and subtlety, subtle and fine as the workings of the human mind hardly conscious of its own movement from point to point. It may be said at once, that in exercising his admirable gift of psychological insight and imagination, Mr. James frequently presupposes great attention on the part of his readers, and an intelligence of reception hardly less than his own intelligence of representation. He is one of the finest of analysts; but nevertheless he not seldom reaches a point where he ceases to analyse and simply suggests with a delicacy conveying the flattering assumption that the reader has keenness and imagination enough of his own to follow up the writer's suggestion with as much certainty as when, a hand being seen at a window, it may be inferred that a human being stands behind it. As a fact, we believe that Mr. James flatters his public too much. The average reader has neither brains nor imaginations to follow out a suggestion; he yawns at psychology; he is apt to resent explanation and non-explanation alike. He loves a good downright legend: "This is a wood," "This is a barn-door," which he who runs may read; he loves an obvious plot, an honest mystery, a conclusion that rounds off everything. All that is a point of view already over-discussed perhaps, and for which there will doubtless be always much to be said; we only refer to it now, because whilst the lovers of Mr. James's stories find a charm beyond that of any other, in his method, at once delicate and powerful, it may probably always forbid his volumes the honour of the railway bookstall, or the seventy thousandth copy of the cheap edition.

In using the word "powerful," it must be understood in the wide sense in which it is applicable to Mr. James's work. There is a usual and perfectly legitimate sense in which it is employed, as expressing a certain movement of passion or energy on the writer's part, through which certain scenes stand out from the remainder of the work, and move the reader in his turn to an emotion that for ever remains in his memory. Such scenes as these are rare with Mr. James; it is perhaps an excess of the

artistic sense of detachment, that occasionally compels him, when we should expect him to be most emotional, to be most restrained. His power is of another kind altogether; it arises from a profound knowledge of what he is writing about, from what seems sometimes an almost exhaustive knowledge of human nature; his anatomy is perfect; every hidden bone and muscle is in its place. His surface (to change the metaphor) may be level, but it never rings hollow; its foundations are deep as those of the life of which he treats; the result is that impression of sustained power that is met with only in the great masters, that is the distinguishing mark of the great masters. Others may charm us—and claim our eternal gratitude for the charm—by their imagination, their fancy, their genius even; but somewhere or other there is a gap in the carpentry, and through the chink the light of disillusion shines. With Mr. James, we tread solidly and look at his presentment of life without a misgiving. It is the first in quality, it is the most essential boon a writer can give us.

We might refer in this connection, and as being among the most perfect presentments of his art, to two of Mr. James's earlier and less well-known stories—'Madame de Mauves,' and 'Washington Square.' The first of these is a story of no great length, with hardly any plot; one of those subtle problems of character and situation in which the author takes pleasure, and ended finally by an epigram, as his stories occasionally find themselves ending, after a fashion somewhat disconcerting to the reader. It is, in brief, the story of a young American girl married to a French *roué*, M. de Mauves, with whom one of her own countrymen falls passionately in love. The point of the story lies in the fashion in which this passion is treated by the husband, the lover, and Madame de Mauves herself; and one has only in reading it to consider what might be made of this apparently hackneyed theme by a superficial, a commonplace, or a vulgar writer to appreciate the delicate originality and powerful handling Mr. James has brought to its treatment. The whole story is in low relief, without a salient incident; its strength lies in the sense that the roots of the faintly-blooming flowers of the little drama reach down to the deepest springs of human action; that the underlying strata of life presupposed by the surface are familiar to the writer as the surface itself. The other story, 'Washington Square,' is much longer, but its *motif*, given in abstract form, is hardly more novel than that of 'Madame de Mauves.' The scene is chiefly laid in New York, and it is the history of a

young girl, who, accredited with the prospect of inheriting a large fortune at her father's death, is pursued by a needy adventurer, with whom she falls blindly in love. The father, as in duty bound, opposes the marriage; the young girl, after many struggles, consents at last to put her lover to the test; he disappears, and the girl lives and dies an old maid. That is all the plot; but this little history, that for sustained and masterly treatment may be compared to '*Eugénie Grandet*' (which for the rest it does not in the least resemble), holds the reader's interest from beginning to end. It has not the special charm of Balzac's masterpiece; the heroine, Catherine, a difficult character to draw, and drawn with extraordinary skill, is represented as a dull girl of limited intelligence and fixed ideas, who wins our sympathy indeed, but appeals much less to the imagination than the immortal *Eugénie*; as the house in Washington Square yields in romantic suggestion to that of the old and faded mansion with the broken stair that we have each of us inhabited in turn. But in historical accuracy and broad grasp of the foundations of life, there is no work with which the American novel can be so fitly mated as with that of the great French master.

II.

These are only two of various masterpieces that Mr. James has given to the world. He has written about a dozen novels, and a considerable number of short stories; and his treatment of the two forms of narrative is sufficiently distinct to demand that they should be considered somewhat apart.

It is a commonplace of literature that the short story, brought to so much perfection by the French, has never flourished in England. Half-a-dozen causes might be assigned for the fact; but it is probably chiefly due to the inferior sense of art as art, possessed by the English as compared with the French. The short story is above all a matter of form, of proportion; and the English sense of form, in respect of literature, is apt to be conspicuously wanting. There are exceptions, of course, and notable ones; but we speak of the rule. Mr. James, whose particular genius and method of work touches that of the French on more sides than one, is nowhere more French than in this; he satisfies our sense of form, of truth of proportion beyond any other writer in the English language that we could name. His shorter stories are of a length varying from a few pages to nine or ten chapters; but in the best of them, of whatever length, and that

includes a large proportion, the form is perfect. It would be hard to find a flaw in the construction of 'Daisy Miller,' 'The Madonna of the Future,' 'Four Meetings,' 'The Pension Beaurepas,' and 'Benvolio;' or, to come down later, in 'The Siege of London,' 'The Author of Beltraffio,' 'The Aspern Papers,' 'The Solution,' and a dozen others that might be named. These delightful stories have, of course, a hundred other claims on our admiration; wit, humour, pathos, a charming gaiety, acute observation of life and character; but it is the faultless skill with which they are framed, that above all, perhaps, "places" them as consummate works of art. The short story, properly treated as such, deals with a single idea, an isolated situation—a rule from which Mr. James never swerves; but much of the singular perfection of his short stories lies in the fact that while the idea, the situation is exhibited, developed and worked out to its legitimate conclusion within the compass of the few pages, more or less, that he allows himself, it is in fact no more isolated than it is possible for any situation in real life to be; it stands with its just relation to the universe exactly indicated, bound to the common life by the million threads that unite common humanity. This is, of course, only to say that when the author sits down to write a short story, he knows his business; but that particular knowledge is so rare among us, that some insistence on it in this case may be permitted. In longer novels, his method is of necessity somewhat different. Like all the greater novelists, Mr. James is interested not merely in the telling of a story, properly so called, in the working out of a situation, the conduct of a love-affair, the development of a plot, but with the entire moving drama of life, the great human comedy, in which situations take their place as mere incidents. In 'The Portrait of a Lady,' in 'The Bostonians,' 'The Princess Casamassima,' 'The Tragic Muse,' and in a less degree 'The Europeans,' 'The American,' 'The Reverberator,' we feel less that the curtain has risen on a comedy of manners or of plot, than on a vast section of society, and of society considered with especial reference to some of its more modern developments. In his earlier as in some of his later work, Mr. James, as we have seen, selected the wide field of the opposing and harmonizing influences of America and Europe; in 'The Bostonians,' he touches the question of Women's Rights; in 'The Princess Casamassima,' we are with the Socialists; whilst his most recent book, 'The Tragic Muse,' sets before us the curious relations that the latest whirligig has brought round between art, and society in its

conventional sense. As a novelist, Mr. James is necessarily concerned with the manifestation of any particular phase with which he is dealing, through the experience of individuals ; but it is obvious that for this a large canvas, a complex scheme is needed, in which perfection of form has in some degree to yield to the exigencies of the spectacle of the huge haphazard activities, the apparently crude fatalities of human existence. There are readers who will always prefer Mr. James's shorter stories, their delicate manipulation, their exquisite style, and perfect proportion ; there are others who will find a deeper interest in the larger issues brought before them in his longer narratives. The question is not one that need trouble us ; it is the privilege of an artist to affect men's minds in very various ways, and there is no danger that Mr. James's admirers will quarrel among themselves.

A novelist's presentment of life, or more justly, perhaps, his choice, his selection out of life, is one thing ; the way in which he personally looks at life and appreciates it, is obviously another. A distinction has always to be sought between a writer's mental attitude and the results given to the world ; and to disengage the man from the artist, the artist from the man, must not unfrequently present itself as a problem a little resembling that of Shylock's pound of flesh. With some writers, indeed, the task is sufficiently easy ; it may simply be abandoned. The author puts, as it is called, his whole soul into his work ; the shaping artist plays a secondary part ; the result may be brilliant, charming, passionate, sentimental or the reverse ; but it at least presents no particular problem ; the author and his work are one. To others, again, the picturesque, the emotional, the moral or the sensational side of existence may appeal so strongly, that an irresistible impulse leads them inevitably to reveal their idiosyncrasy through their presentation of life. With a writer so impersonal as Mr. James, the case is different, the problem more complicated. He has to be considered primarily in his artistic capacity ; it is his supreme distinction that he invariably includes and excludes as an artist, not as a man ; and his work lends itself to negative deductions, as it were, rather than to positive ones. To speak, for instance, of his writing as ironical, is on the surface to state an untenable proposition ; he is genial (one might rather say), he is good-humoured, he is indifferent, he is at moments extraordinarily tender ; it would, we believe, be impossible to find from beginning to end of his works one cruel or

sarcastic word. It is only by degrees we come to a perception of the profound irony implied by that attitude of good-humoured neutrality, of genial indifference. His books, on the whole, strike one as optimistic; a certain kindly view of the events and accidents of life pervades them; they deal by preference with the saner rather than with the more morbid side of humanity; but they create finally a sense of aloofness on the part of the writer that seems to imply a profound disenchantment, what we have ventured to call a profound irony lurking at the root of his conception of life, a sense of the singular sadness, futility and vanity on the whole, of the beings whom he observes and depicts as they cross and recross the stage of the world. As might be expected, this is less apparent in his earlier than in his later work; it is nowhere more apparent than in his latest novel, 'The Tragic Muse.' In that remarkable book, modern to a degree that makes all other novels seem for the moment old-fashioned and out-of-date, by comparison, what is termed the general and the particular is carried to the last point; the central figure and the central motive, that is to say, being a woman of an artistic type common to all time, brought into contact with the newest modes and developments of culture and society. The theme is one that lends itself with particular felicity to the author's especial genius for unimpassioned observation; it is developed with the mature strength of a splendid and virile talent; but the final impression it creates is of something a little hard, perhaps, a little too irresponsible.

The impression, we must immediately add, arises in great measure from the fact that the scheme of the story does not happen to include any of those characters that Mr. James knows how to treat with a particular kindness, with a genial warmth even, springing from a larger sympathy with human nature than the most discriminating observation can supply. It is entirely characteristic of the author, that it is not, as a rule, in the delineation of his principal heroes and heroines that we discover this kindly and sympathetic note, but in that of his humbler characters. There is no commoner or cheaper device of the inferior novelist than to seize upon one or another weak or absurd side of a human being and hold it up to scorn; to pillory a character for some physical or mental defect, to paint the smaller vices with an air of being above the human race, in colours as false as the follies that are described. Mr. James not only (it need not be said) has nothing to do with vulgarities

such as these, not only he never laughs at, but always with his characters; he does much more. In his treatment of the old, the poor, the humble, the disgraced by fortune, such as come into all work that embraces wide fields of human action, there is a tenderness equalled by no other writer that we can recall. We feel disposed to insist upon this quality because it is the most personal, perhaps the only personal note he allows to modify the rigour of disinterested observation. Sometimes, in fact, he dramatises it, so to speak, by leaving the story to be narrated by an imaginary person, as where he deals with the disillusioned painter in 'The Madonna of the Future;' with Mr. Ruck, the ruined American father, in 'The Pension Beaurepas;' or Caroline Spencer, in 'Four Meetings.' Elsewhere, however, those humbler individuals who have the honour to hold (as we judge) an especial place in the author's regard, take their place among the other characters in an impersonal narrative; we need only mention Madame Grandoni, in 'Roderick Hudson;' Miss Birdseye, in 'The Bostonians;' the old violinist, Lady Aurora, Miss Pynsent, in 'Princess Casamassima,' to illustrate our meaning. And in connection with this point may be mentioned the particular power of pathos shown by Mr. James on the very rare occasions—not half-a-dozen perhaps in the whole course of his books—that he cares to exercise it; that pathos which, in its entire freedom from self-consciousness, from the implied invitation, "Come, let us weep, for this is a melancholy occasion," is among the rarer gifts of the novelist. Few people, we should think, could read unmoved the death of Miss Birdseye, which in simple and suggestive beauty recalls the description of the passage of Christiana across the river of death in the 'Pilgrim's Progress;' or that other chapter in 'The Princess Casamassima,' where the tenderly humorous enhances the pathetic, as the devoted little dress-maker comforts herself on her deathbed with the illusions of her adopted son's greatness; or again, in altogether another key, the scenes darkening to the tragic close of the same novel. These passages, of an absolute simplicity, show how far Mr. James's genius can, with his rare permission, carry him in that direction; though the very rarity of the occasions on which he indulges it, enhances perhaps its final value.

III.

This, indeed, may be said in general of what is emotional and of what is descriptive in Mr. James's novels. No one can

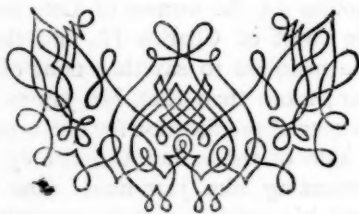
describe better than he can ; but he has apparently decided, and we think on the whole justly, that novels are not the proper vehicle for descriptions of scenery as such, and we seldom come across more than is requisite for the mere *mise en scène*. We say justly, on the whole ; because whilst accepting the theory as true, it is possible to recall novelists who indulge in a richer decoration for their characters than Mr. James does, and with whom we find no ground for quarrel on that score. In the same way with the emotional ; Mr. James for the most part avoids it, travels round it, gets at his effects without it ; and considering the floods of futile words, the pages of sentiment that do duty for passion and feeling, we are again disposed to say that he is right. Nevertheless, emotion is a great weapon in the hand of a master ; Mr. James, as he proves in passages here and there, wields it with as much mastery as any one ; there are moments when we find ourselves wishing he would wield it a little oftener.

A novelist, however, is obviously what the grace of heaven and his own wit make him. Mr. James may be only sometimes descriptive and occasionally emotional ; but he is witty, he is humorous, he is epigrammatic ; he is learned—consummately learned in human nature. He is, in brief, pre-eminently the novelist of character and observation. Of the ordinary resources of the story-teller, indeed, Mr. James is apt to avail himself but sparingly. Of love-making proper, for instance, there is but little in his volumes. There are lovers, of course, and marriages, —often unhappy ones ; but these are not the main business on hand. That lies in tracing through delicate and minute observation of the surface, the hidden sources that determine action. His imagination, which may be held to be wanting in richness in certain directions, is of extraordinary strength in the conception of these springs of motive and of conduct, of the action and interaction of the human mind. In the same way, the brilliant procession of heroines that passes through his pages, seem to be there less to illustrate a charming side of life, than because no picture of life, charming or the reverse, is complete without them. A good deal might be said about Mr. James's treatment of women. One's first impression (and even one's last impression, perhaps) is that he treats them coldly ; that in his moments of keenest insight into their motives and sentiments, he still views them, as it were, from outside, and at a distance. This, of course, may simply be taken as part of his disinterested treatment in general ; but the impression of coldness remains, even

with the fresh memory of the tenderness of touch that goes to the delineation of Miss Birdseye and Miss Pynsent, of the genial mood in which he gives us Olive Chancellor and the incomparable Henrietta Stackpole, and the mingled humour and gentleness of his presentment of Pansy Osmond, that peerless little flower among *jeunes filles*. For whilst other authors often leave on our mind a sense of their affection, their sympathy with, their admiration for their heroines, of their endowing them with delightful qualities for private ends of friendship, Mr. James stands aloof from all that. His women, good and bad, pass before him, and he views each in turn with a careful and impartial eye; he cares, he gives us to believe, no more for Isabel Archer or Madame de Cintré than for Madame Merle, or Mademoiselle Noémie. The method has its advantages; the reader is never torn in two by the antagonism between his own preferences and those forced upon him by the author; he could never hate the worst of Mr. James's women, and he has one or two very bad ones, as he hates the virtuous Laura Bell. And yet there are moments when we feel that he might maintain a rather less distant attitude. We feel it, because we feel that the author's position towards certain of his heroes is, without any detriment to the attitude of "detachment," of a somewhat warmer character; we are sure that he is on terms of the friendliest intimacy with Ralph Touchett and Lord Warburton, with Nick Dormer, and even with poor little Hyacinth Robinson.

For the rest, we can feel nothing but gratitude for the long and varied succession of portraits that Mr. James hangs before our eyes; his portraiture is always true and brilliant; he seizes the salient points with unerring skill, and there are faces and figures in his books that live in our memory as part of the more intimate experience of life. We can imagine certain of his women, in the future, forming part of the furniture of the nineteenth century, as in another art the women of Lely and of Reynolds furnish for us the court of Charles II., and the social life of George III. It is needless to say that none of these portraits are made to order; more than that, Mr. James, as we have intimated, shows no special predilection for one type over another; that is the good side of the rather melancholy indifference of which we were accusing him just now. One of his earliest successes associated him with a certain exceptional type of the American girl; but admirably as he depicts her, we cannot perceive that he scores successes less admirable, in his delineation

of types who have little in common with Daisy Miller. Nevertheless, his heroines being almost exclusively of one nationality—with the exception of the charming Biddy Dormer, English, and English again to her very finger-tips, he has given us no heroine of importance who is not American—one or two characteristics appear in almost all; though varying so much in colour and degree in one and another, that we hardly know how to define them otherwise than as the breath of New England animating its daughters. This is vague, but not more vague perhaps than the impalpable spirit that Mr. James has caught with so certain an instinct and communicated so delicately to every woman, young or old, who hails from the Transatlantic shores in his novels. It is companion to that hardly less vague, but no less certain breath of what we may venture to term the American tradition that flutters through Mr. James's volumes; a breath too little deliberate, too little conscious of itself to be named Puritanism, but associated with a certain conception of the American character that no one has illustrated more happily than Mr. James himself. It might, we say again, be hard to define; it might be difficult to put one's finger on a passage and say: "it is here or there"; it may be summed up finally, perhaps, in the impression left by the volumes, as a whole, that the good and evil of the world indifferent to the author as an artist, are not indifferent to him as a man. To quote his own words: "There is one point where the moral sense and the artistic sense lie very near together; that is, in the light of the very obvious truth that the deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer." It is in this sense that we seem to distinguish throughout Mr. James's work the faint aroma of the Puritan tradition.



ESTHER VANHOMRIGH.

BY MARGARET L. WOODS,

AUTHOR OF "A VILLAGE TRAGEDY."



CHAPTER V.

THE Dean was the last person in the world to be pleased with the impertinent familiarity of address which was Miss Stone's imitation of easy good manners. Yet on the whole he did not regret her arrival, as having hastily sent for his horse while he took a dish of coffee in the Book-room, he trotted homewards in the pleasant evening sunshine. For most of the way his road followed the curves of the Liffey. The hurrying river that swirled and foamed under the bower, ran here less swiftly, mingling with its own coffee-brown colour the reflected tones of its banks. The unpollarded willows grew luxuriantly beside it. Here they tossed their tremulous, gleaming wealth of foliage against a background of dark woods, there drooped it across a great mill-wheel or down into the hurrying water. Every willow on the road between Lucan and Dublin was known to Swift, who was a lover and a planter of willows. To-day, however, such few points in the surrounding scenery as he otherwise usually observed claimed no share in his meditations. His natural sensitiveness of disposition made it intolerably painful to him to see suffering, either mental or physical, and ready to do almost anything to relieve it. The same sensitiveness by a common paradox, made him eager to fly from sight or knowledge of it. Besides, he had his own reasons for avoiding everything outside public matters which could tend to excite him. For thirty years he had bent the whole strength of his strong will to subduing an extreme nervous excitability which his pride had usually helped him to conceal from the world, but of which he himself was painfully aware. The first time he felt his reason totter under its stress, he had seen that the choice before him was not one between

common self-government and common absence of it, but between sanity and madness; not immediate, but gradual and inevitable madness. From that time his whole struggle had been to achieve an existence of philosophic calm, in so far as that was compatible with the fulfilment of his legitimate ambitions, and the partial satisfaction of those affections which he had not merely in common with other men, but beyond them. He had been in a measure successful. The virulence and other defects of his pen may lend a touch of insanity to his writings in the eyes of a modern reader, but the contemporaries of his earlier days at least, saw nothing unusual in them but their power. He had been fortunate enough to find a woman who could both win and return his love, and yet agree to share his life but incompletely, her character and social circumstances combining to make her satisfied with her position so long as she was content with him. Thus it was years before he had cause to acknowledge that in avoiding marriage he had not avoided the difficulties and disturbances that are inseparable from all close human ties.

So long as he was in the presence of Esther's despair his sympathetic distress was greater than his annoyance at the stormy scene to which she had subjected him; but as he rode home by himself, annoyance tended to become the uppermost feeling in his mind. In the most complex questions of conduct there is usually a moment when there is something which it would be right and tolerably simple to do; but like other "tides in the affairs of men" it is apt to pass very quickly, and afterwards every course involves a certain amount of wrong. That moment was long past in the history of his relations with Esther Vanhomrigh. However he treated her, he never felt easy in his mind as to the wisdom, or the justice of his conduct. Yet he did not exactly reproach himself, for he justly considered that the chances had been a million to one that such a passion as Esther's for him would prove a madness as brief as it was violent and singular. He might, had he been other than he was, have apprehended the peculiar depth and fervour of her emotional nature, but he could not be expected to realize his own fascination, the brilliant mind, the endlessly varied character, the mingled charm and terror of his ways, which made all the world beside little and insipid to her who had once fallen under his spell.

"I am very unlucky," he said, spurring his horse into a canter;

"she seemed to have sense enough once, but now—Gad, of us two she's by far the maddest. Heaven send us safe from womenkind—except little P. P. T! P. P. T. is a true philosopher, and never stormed and wept at poor fond Rogue in all her dear little days, not even when he richly deserved it. I'll go see her at supper-time and we'll be merry."

The twilight had fallen and the oil-lamps were twinkling when he rode into Dublin. Hastily changing his riding-dress, he left the Deanery by the garden door and was about to call a passing hackney coach, when he remembered that the old man at the corner had been sick lately. He was an honest old man, who sold pies and never begged, and the Dean who usually dedicated special economies to special charities, reserved for him all the sixpences he might have spent on hackney coaches, and did not spend. He was tired with his expedition to Cellbridge and in a hurry for P. P. T. and her supper, but as the old man was sick, he must not drive in a coach. So he strode off down St. Nicolas Street to Ormonde's Quay, dropping a sixpence in among the pies as he passed the corner of St. Patrick's.

When he reached the small house at Ormonde's Quay, he went upstairs to the parlour three steps at a time, and opening the door a little but remaining outside it, said in a whining voice :

"Madams, good madams, here's a poor gentleman that has not tasted herrings these three nights. For the love of God, ladies, one little herring at three a penny."

"Why, that's Presto!" cried Mrs. Johnson.

"Pray now, come in or go out," she added, somewhat tartly ;
"you are putting Dingley and me in a deuce of draught."

The two ladies had just sat down to supper.

"Herrings!" he cried triumphantly, shutting the door behind him.

"It does so happen that we have 'em to-night," returned Hetty, "though we have had much more delicate fare these three nights, if you had chosen to come. Ha'n't we, D. D.?"

Dingley, who appeared to be drawing a complete fish's backbone out of her mouth by some kind of jugglery, was naturally a full minute before answering :

"That we have, Dean. Besides, Hetty, you know we only have 'em to-night because that Mrs. O'Reilly is so very disappointing. And indeed 'tis quite a favour to get one of her fat partridges, but they can't be depended upon. I said to Mrs.

O'Reilly only yesterday, when she was at the door with her basket—'Now, my good Mrs. O'Reilly,' I says——"

"O pray, pray, D. D.," cried Mrs. Johnson, "don't begin with your 'I says' and 'she says' till the next wet Midsummer day, when we shall have time to get to the end of 'em."

"Faith, I love a herring," said the Dean, sitting down opposite Mrs. Johnson at the small table; "but I admire D. D. who eats 'em every night of her life, and don't yet know how to eat 'em like a Christian."

After twenty years he had still not given up hoping to improve poor Dingley's manners, nor being irritated at his failure to do so.

"We don't eat 'em every night of our lives," retorted P. P. T. "I wish you'd not make us and our housewifery the laughing-stock of Dublin. 'Tis too bad of you, Presto."

"Sure we never was so scurvy mean as you say, serving nothing for your supper but three herrings in a Delft plate," quoth Dingley, indignantly. "You know we have real chaney which you gave us yourself, Dean. I use it when Hetty's well enough to wash it, but she won't have me do't since I cracked the tureen, which was not my fault at all."

"Poor little dear P. P. T.," said Swift gently, looking across the table and ignoring Dingley. "She must be very sick if she cannot take a jest. Does Presto make a laughing-stock of Stella? He thought he was always trying to make his poor jangling old lyre tuneable enough to do her honour."

"You have done me a very great honour," returned P. P. T. holding her head high. "If others don't think so the more's their folly."

"Good girl!" said he reaching across the table to pat her hand. "That's the way to speak. Presto often thinks P. P. T. the only reasonable woman that ever he knew. That's why he loves her and always will, as hope saved."

He smiled at her and she could not possibly have helped smiling back at him.

"But what ails you to-night, poor pretty Pet?" he asked. "You have ate nothing but bread for your supper. Go now and lie down on your couch and let Dingley, that's never sick, make you some broth."

Yes, P. P. T. was ailing; she was generally ailing now, but the couch Presto had given her for her comfort, she considered too good to be used, and put away under holland in the best parlour.

And she would not for worlds be so unmannerly as to leave the table before the rest of the company. When the frugal meal was over, Swift opened without remark the folding-doors that led into that solemn apartment, the best parlour, and pulled the holland cover off the couch; then, suddenly catching up Hetty in his arms, he ran in and deposited her upon it.

"Ugh, you're heavy, Madam Pet!" he cried, shrugging his shoulders. "Yet not so heavy as you was. If you'll but promise me not to grow lean, I'll never again say you're fat—for indeed 'tis a lie. I hate skinny women like Dingley," he added in a lower voice.

Here Dingley, who was luckily somewhat deaf, followed with a cushion for Hetty's head, but he took it from her.

"Pray go to your own chair in the parlour, D. D.," he said. "I know 'tis the only thing you love. If you push it but a little back I can swear with a clear conscience I had my eye upon you the whole evening. 'Tis more than you can do for me, since in ten minutes yours will be shut."

"I shall not be asleep, if that's what you would say, Dean," returned Dingley, with dignity. "I close my eyes to think the better." This dialogue had passed between the two an incalculable number of times.

Swift arranged the cushion under Hetty's head less awkwardly than might have been expected, sat down by her and kissed her hand five times; a kiss for every finger beginning at the thumb. She smiled faintly, but made no response. This was only as usual, for she was essentially undemonstrative, and such small endearments as passed between them had always been mostly on his side.

"I loathe Dingley," he said, when he had accomplished the five kisses. "I hate, I could cheerfully damn Dingley."

His voice was lowered so that his objurgations could not reach the ears of their innocent object.

Hetty laughed a little.

"Poor D. I love her well enough—that is, as well as I could love any woman I was compelled to live with."

"You are not compelled to live with her," returned Swift eagerly. "We can do well enough now without her money."

"'Tis not a matter of money," replied Hetty. "Even were it so, 'twould not be just to throw off D. D. so soon as we could spare her money. She could not live without ours, and I believe

she would be ill without my chidings; they're like letting blood to her."

"Unkind Dallah! You think of Dingley and not of Presto, whose comfort is quite spoiled by her. When the debt on the Deanery is cleared, I will make a debt on D. D. I will pay her to go."

"You will only have to pay some one else to come, and hate her just as much when she is there," she replied. "Besides, Presto, we are at Dingley's mercy. She has of necessity shared our secrets."

"No, none of importance," he answered, meaning that she had known nothing of the marriage.

"I know not what you call important," she replied coldly. "She has known much more of our intimacy than any one besides ourselves, and though she herself must perforce believe it innocent, if she be angry with us she will talk, and the world will say she was our dupe."

"A fig for the world! You wasn't used to trouble for what the world said when you was younger, Madam Pet."

"No, indeed, I did not," she returned. "But I cannot help troubling when such things happen."

"What things, dear goose?" asked he, taking up her fan, and fanning her with it. "I know there's some envious chit of sixteen been saying you'll never see five and thirty again—for even Envy would never guess your age—and wondering what your Grattans and Fords and Delanys can see in an old maid, Pish!" And he tapped her lightly on the cheek with the fan.

"No, Presto; I don't think your chit of sixteen like to be troubled with envy of me. 'Tis not that. Something vastly unpleasant has happened. But you're going to spend to-morrow at Delville, you say? Ask dear good Delany about it. He'll tell you what it is."

"Why is Delany to know more of P. P. T.'s affairs than P. D. F. R.? Tell me yourself, P. P. T., I insist. 'Tis some trifle, I'll warrant, that that fool Delany has hatched out to look important over."

"Dr. Delany is no fool, Presto, as you know well, and the matter may seem a trifle to you, but 'tis both sad and mortifying to me. But I'll not tell you."

"Ah, but you shall—you must. How can you fancy anything that gives his de' char' pretty Pet uneasiness can be indifferent to

the Fond Rogue? Pray try and think kindly of Presto, who thinks so kindly of you."

"Oh, well, since you insist." She paused and went on reluctantly. "I went this morning to pay my wedding visit to Sophia Walls—Smith I should say. You know Sophy always was a favourite of mine when she was quite a little miss, though Lord knows I detest most children, especially girls. They showed me into the dining-parlour and kept me drumming with my heels for twenty minutes, and then down comes Delany, who happened to be in the house. And what do you think he came to tell me? Sophy, if you please, was not permitted to come, and Mrs. Walls was too ashamed. So 'twas he very good naturedly undertook to do Mr. Smith's dirty work, lest the man himself should do it and be more insulting than was necessary. For he came, Presto, to tell me that Mr. Smith had desired his wife not to receive visits from me."

"Infernal, insolent puppy!" cried Presto indignantly.

"Oh, he was kind enough to admit I might be virtuous," continued P. P. T., calm but bitter. "But he seems to have heard something or other about you and me, and decrees that his Sophia's friends must be, like King Somebody's wife, above suspicion. Mrs. Walls is sincerely sorry, poor woman; 'tis none of her fault, nor Sophy's either."

"I am grieved that you should lose your friend, who was a good girl, and grieved too that she should have tied herself to a pretending, censorious fool. I'll not call that a trifle. But as to disturbing ourselves because the fellow reflects upon our conduct, we should be very foolish to do that, dear Dallah. I've heard tell he was ignorant enough at the University, though here he sets up for a fine scholar, and most like his virtue too's one of those new brooms that sweep a bit too clean."

"I'll not affect more indifference than I feel," returned Hetty, "though I know 'tis to my own forgetting disposition that I must chiefly look for comfort."

"Sure P. P. T. cannot think it Presto's fault," cried Swift, surprised and nettled by her manner. "What has he not suffered for the sake of discretion? Yes, and often was discreet in spite of P. P. T. And never mentioned her to his oldest friend but with infinite precautions."

"I told you I had no wish to talk of the matter," said Hetty, beginning to rise from her couch. "But Presto cannot expect me to be as careless and ignorant of the world as I was twenty years since."

This unpleasant incident had also reminded her of what she oftenest contrived to forget; namely, that she had not received the absolute and unswerving devotion which she had once expected, and which might have compensated her for some social disadvantages. But she kept that reflection to herself.

The agitations of the day had been almost too much for Swift's equanimity, and now the peaceful evening he had promised himself at Ormonde's Quay was proving quite the reverse.

A dark flush overspread his face, and he clutched the arms of his chair.

"By heavens!" he cried, in a low voice of bitter passion, "this insolent hypocrite shall rue the day he made an enemy of me! I'll make him smart for't, I'll make him roar again. Never fear, P. T., but we'll have our revenge on him. But that"—here he leaned forward and waved his hand in the direction of Hetty, who was sitting at the foot of the couch,—“that's not what Stella here wants. No, she wants to play mistress at the Deanery, to hold her public days, and to strut swingingly up the Cathedral to the Dean's pew with Patrick carrying her prayer-book. She wants all the world to be making their curtsies to Madam Swift. Once she loved Presto, but now 'tis the world she loves.”

The fact that there was a grain of truth in this accusation did not make it the less offensive to poor Hetty.

"I'll not talk with you when you are in this mood, sir," said she indignantly. "When have I said a word on which you can put this construction? This is some fit of madness on you."

Swift fell back in his chair, and his flush faded to a vivid pallor.

"Madness!" he groaned. "Ay, 'twas madness to believe a woman's word when she said she cared not whether the world knew of her marriage; she only cared to be my wife before God and the Church. Tell me, do you whisper your gossips the poor Dean's mad—mad?"

He was clasping his trembling hands across his eyes, endeavouring to calm his excitement. She had never before seen him lose his self-control, and her surprise almost overpowered her indignation. He was scrupulously temperate, but to-night he must surely have departed from his strict rule.

"Presto," she said, rising to her feet, "I don't know what you're

talking about, and I fear you don't know yourself. Sure you have dined too well somewhere."

He was too proud to accept the accusation and too prudent to deny it, since it afforded an explanation for his unwonted outburst. He remained silent with his hand still over his eyes.

"Where did you dine, Presto?"

"Good night, P. P. T. I am not well. I am going home."

Hetty knew not whether she was pleased or sorry to conclude he had dined with Miss Vanhomrigh. She was apt, rightly or wrongly, to trace his unamiable moods to that pernicious influence. Now she considered she had a definite complaint to make against Miss Vanhomrigh, and before morning had turned most of her indignation into that channel.

As Swift walked along Ormonde's Quay in the direction of the Deanery, he struck the cobble-stones furiously with his stick. He was angry with himself and every one else.

"Confound women!" he muttered. "If I could begin life again, on my soul I'd never speak to one. P. P. T. is the best of them, but I was an ass when I gave her rights over me."

To acknowledge his marriage now, after all this while, was so difficult and would give rise to so much scandal, and as to taking a wife to live in his house and accommodating himself to a domestic life, it was more repugnant to him than ever. Above all there was his secret. Heaven forbid that it should be in the hands of two women! He sometimes wondered that he so little repented having confided it to Essie, though her impulsive temperament made her less likely to keep a secret than Hetty Johnson. He could not reasonably explain his greater confidence in her, but its source lay in his instinctive faith in her more supreme and perfect love for him. P. P. T. loved him as well as she knew how, as well as most people knew how, but Essie could love better than that. As he passed over the dark, dirty, hurrying Liffey, that was hastening to bear the refuse of the town to the sea, he almost wished himself a stick or a straw to be seized and borne away by the water, that came flowing swiftly down from the Bower, and swiftly past Ormonde's Quay; to be borne away and tossed out at length on the wide, fresh, lonely sea, far from, purified from all contact with humanity.

A kind of fair was being held in the long, narrow St. Nicolas Street that evening. It was at best a malodorous street, the lower stories of its crumbling houses open to the pavement and

full of second-hand clothes and other wares. The feeble oil-lamps that swung over these established shops, were to-night reinforced by the flaring torches of itinerant vendors. In their fitful glare a crowd of dirty, ragged people pressed about from stall to stall, chattering, yelling, laughing over their bargains and their play. High above the torches and the confused movement of the street, and beyond its dark vanishing line of gables, the Cathedral spire stood silent, pointing up to the blue gulf of heaven, to the quiet stars.

With his eyes raised to this, the Dean pushed hastily on, bestowing as little attention as possible on the crowd, the "drove of Yahoos," as he called them to himself in bitter disgust; though he could not quite overlook certain elvish children, who boldly pulled at his gown, and women who called out a "Good night to you, your Riverence," or a "God bless you, Mr. Dane," as he passed.

No, he would not go to Delville to-morrow. He would let them suppose he had gone, but he would spend the day riding out along the strand; perhaps dine at Howth Castle, perhaps nowhere.

Next morning he awoke calmed and refreshed by sleep, but with the uncomfortable feeling of a child who has gone to bed naughty and unrepentant. He wrote an affectionate apologetic note to P. P. T., enquiring after her health, begging her not to trouble about that list she was to copy for him, and telling her he meant to be out of Dublin till the evening. Then he despatched some Cathedral business, mounted his horse and presently was cantering along the shore of the bay, meeting with delight the fresh breeze from the sea, that glittered and gloomed far out to the eastward under the changeful morning sky.

CHAPTER VI.

As soon as the Dean had left the book-room at Cellbridge and started on his homeward ride, Miss Stone, whom he had remorselessly snubbed, began to shake out the draggled feathers of her self-esteem and take her revenge. She had no intention of trampling on Esther's susceptibilities in the process; like most people who say unpardonable things, she simply never thought of her auditor except as an audience. The supreme necessity for her was to minister with words to her own vanity or resentment. She would have been amazed but, it is to be

feared more offended than grieved, had she learned that she was generally considered malicious, and that wherever she went she left behind her rankling wounds.

"My dear Essie," she said, the roundness and prominence of her eyes becoming more marked than usual; "do you know, if I was you, I would not receive visits from single gentlemen without I had a lady here. 'Tis true you are not young, yet scarce old enough to live alone. Dr. Swift too is an elderly man—he shows his years now, though in London I remember he looked young for 'em—elderly, but *such* a man!"

"The Dean of St. Patrick's is a very old friend of mine, cousin, as you must be aware."

"Friend, my dear girl! Why 'tis generally admitted he treated you exceedingly ill, and sure we all admired your spirit in coming out here and avoiding his company, so soon as you found how matters stood."

"I came out here, cousin, when my principal law-business was settled and when I could afford to live here."

"Sure you don't mean to tell me you never heard of his amour with Mrs. Johnson? A very witty woman, and handsome still, they say, but of shocking low birth. However, 'tis said he has married her."

"His friends cannot suspect him of an intrigue and know nothing of a marriage. Methinks, Anna, you have too good a memory for stale scandals."

"Stale! Why, there's always something new about the Dean. Cousin Annesley's own woman that's sister to Mrs. Walls' maid—you'll acknowledge the Walls are friends of his—she says the Archdeacon and all the family are in a terrible taking because their new son-in-law from England threatens to shut the door in Mrs. Johnson's face, and speaks strongly against the Dean. But I hear that Dr. Delany—who's a great admirer of this Mrs. Johnson—a strange sort of woman to be having admirers at her age!—Delany more than hints she's Madam Swift, if the truth were known. And he's a friend now, an't he?"

"I am not acquainted with Dr. Delany," returned Essie shortly.

Indeed the good Delany, in his enthusiastic friendship for Mrs. Johnson, was a somewhat bitter partisan, and had avoided being introduced to one whom he believed to have been a source of grief to her, and whom he was willing to consider responsible for certain of his admired Dean's shortcomings.

"If you have no advice to offer me except that I should attend to the tattle of servants and other common folk, and decline the visits of my oldest friend—why, cousin, you had better not waste breath on me," she added.

Anna had long pursued the project of becoming a regular inmate of cousin Vanhomrigh's house, for now Molly's keen eyes and mocking tongue were removed, it would be, she thought, very comfortable. It somewhat flurried her to perceive that she had irritated her cousin, whom she was used to pronounce of a phlegmatic disposition.

"Lord, Essie," she said, "don't be huffed! 'Tis a difficult matter for a young woman to live alone; but I must say I think you no worse off than when you had poor Molly. You always was much the more sober-minded and discreet of the two; I was your friend from the first, and frequently defended you when my mamma reflected on your reading, and would say 'twas better to be a bit of a reader than a giddy painted thing like your sister, poor creature—who was certainly heavily chastened in this life, and I hope has found peace in another."

"Cousin Anna," cried Essie, trembling with mingled feelings; "There was a time when I was in spirits enough to be diverted by such observations as yours. Ten years ago Moll and I were vastly diverted by the pleasant notion you and Sarah had got of making yourselves agreeable to a couple of sisters by backbiting one to the other. I remember Moll carrying the jest yet further, by praising you and Sarah to each other. For my part, even then, I sometimes found such manners too base and disgusting to laugh at 'em. But now, now when my heart's yet bleeding from the loss of my dear girl, you come and think to flatter me by your dull censure of her whose excellence was ever my joy and delight, of her I had the happiness to love. Why, 'tis not common decency. I have defended you too, Anna; I have often said you had more good nature than appeared, but I promise you I'll never say so again. I tell you plainly, I detest your conduct. Heavens, what a heart must you bear!"

And here the passion of tears, which she had stopped in mid course in the Bower, returned on her, and rushing from the room she left Miss Stone to her reflections—or rather her stupefaction. Anna had never heard such plain speaking as this since she parted from her own sister, and it is to be feared that Essie's speech, though plain, was less addressed to her particular faculties than Sarah's was wont to be. She really could not see

what she had said that was so very dreadful. She had not alluded to the family scandal, though of course she had thought of it, for her mind was of the kind where such rubbish lies heaped, the most ancient and the newest jostling each other like Roman potsherds and Britannia metal teapots in the depths of a city river. Stupefaction having given way to indignation, and cousin Vanhomrigh not having re-appeared, she set forth to return on foot to the place whence she had come, where she could not resist telling the tale of her own discomfiture to ears not wholly sympathetic.

Meantime Essie, having locked both the parlour-doors, lay there face downwards on Molly's couch in a paroxysm of sobs, the physical convulsion of which made her almost unconscious of their cause, or rather causes. When it was over, she had promised herself solemnly on her knees to keep her promise to Molly, not only in the letter but in the spirit. She would insist on Cadenus telling her whether he was or was not married, or otherwise bound by ties nearer and dearer than he had acknowledged, to this Mrs. Johnson. If so, she would leave Ireland, and not endeavour to forget him—for that was impossible—but endeavour to allow him to forget her, which she was compelled to believe he would find only too easy. She was to spend the next day in Dublin on business connected with her property, and Francis was to accompany her. She would leave him later in the day when the Dean was likely to be at home, and go ask her plain momentous question.

The twilight was beginning to fall as Essie approached the Deanery on the day following the Dean's visit to Cellbridge. She might have reached it earlier, but on various pretexts she had put off her visit till the last possible moment. It had been her invariable custom to call there with due ceremony, having her old man-servant with her to announce her arrival by a pompous double knock at the great door. But the Dean had frequently let her out by his garden-door, and as this happened to be standing open, she went in by it, too intent on her purpose to consider whether so informal an entrance would meet with his approval. From the garden she could see some one writing in the window of the library. Candles were already lighted in the room, and against their flame she saw the silhouette of a woman's head, which certainly did not belong to Mrs. Brent the housekeeper. Her heart gave a great bound and then stood still; something told her that this was Mrs. Johnson. She

stood for some minutes with her fascinated gaze fixed on the silhouette bowed over a great book and the quickly moving pen. Then turning round she was aware of some one else in the garden—a man in shirt-sleeves, digging potatoes. Patrick had been left this task by his master that morning, and had postponed it till now.

"Is the Dean within, Patrick?" she asked.

"No, madam, he's gone to Delville. I hope I see your la'ship in good health."

"Purely, I thank you. Who is the lady in the library?"

"Sure, 'tis Mrs. Johnson, madam." And having said this, Patrick scratched his head and was penetrated with regret at not having lied.

"I wish to pay her my respects. Will you announce me, Patrick?"

He gave a comical look at his earth-stained clothes and hands.

"Sure, madam, she'd be after calling me a dirty divil for gladiatoring round with the quality widout a dacent coat to my back."

"No matter, I will announce myself," replied Miss Vanhomrigh, and turned impulsively towards the house; it struck her that it was perhaps all the better that she should appear alone.

Hetty Johnson, with that native philosophy which had justly endeared her to her friend, had easily made up her mind to pass over the unpleasant incident of the preceding evening. This philosophy of hers perhaps owed something to the fact that Madam P. P. T. in spite of her ailments, was an excellent sleeper. A good eight hours' sleep usually does its work in smoothing out the ruffled mind as thoroughly as a good high tide, that smoothes out the teased and trampled sands of a watering-place, leaving there fresh stores of shining seaweed and wet shells for the children to gather. In token that she bore no malice against her friend, she had come to copy into his ledger his list of the poor people who were to receive badges, entitling them to beg within the Liberties, whence other beggars were henceforth to be excluded. A task which would be the more obviously a labour of love, because the Dean knew that P. P. T. shrugged her graceful shoulders at this new-fangled arrangement, as at one of poor dear Presto's many odd fancies, which one must indulge because they were his. She had even said that had she lived within the Liberties, she would, upon her word, have laughed at his rules, and been a

free-trader in beggars; for sure the poor wretches had all a right to get what they could, and she would not herself be near so charitable were it not for the number and the divertingness of the Dublin beggars. His official beggars would soon become as dull as beadles, and charm not a groat out of any one's pocket.

So P. P. T. smiled at her own virtue, with a half-humorous and quite unpharisaical pleasure therein, as she finished her copy and wrote beneath it the date, and "Jonathan Swift," in a hand which other people might think his, but which he would know. As she was forming the big "J" there came a knock at the door. She said "Come in," without raising her eyes, feeling sure it would be only Dingley or Mrs. Brent. The person came in, but did not advance into the room. When she had finishing writing "Jonathan Swift," she looked up and saw the person standing by the door—a lady very tall and pale in the dim light, and her long straight mourning cloak. The hood had half fallen back from her fair head, and her large dilated eyes were fixed on Mrs. Johnson with a strange, intent look that was almost beseeching in its anxiety.

"Mrs. Johnson—I have the honour to address?" she asked in a low voice, harmonious but somewhat tremulous.

Mrs. Johnson, whose mind moved quickly, did not waste much time on astonishment. She stood up under arms almost immediately.

"Your servant, madam," she replied, holding her head up proudly on her long neck, and returning the intruder's look with one more cold and keen. "Your visit is doubtless to the Dean. He is abroad, and is not expected home till late."

"It was meant for him, yet, madam, I'd as lief it were to you," returned Miss Vanhomrigh, nervously grasping her own cloak.

"Pray, madam, be seated," said Mrs. Johnson, determined not to be justly accused of ill-breeding. "May I enquire the name of her who honours me with a visit?"

"Forgive me, madam, if I do not answer that question," replied Essie, her voice still tremulous. "Who I am matters not, so you will but believe my intentions are honest, as indeed madam, they are."

Mrs. Johnson bowed with a little look of disdain that passed unnoticed. Miss Vanhomrigh might not know her by sight, but she knew Miss Vanhomrigh; Dingley had once pointed out the

young lady from Mrs. Stoyte's parlour window, and after that she had passed her once or twice in the streets of Dublin, and each time with a thrill of pain and repulsion that surprised herself. She had seen the visitor approaching the house, but owing to the gathering dusk and her bad eyesight had concluded her to be a friend of Mrs. Brent's. But now she had no doubt who it was. Did the discreet Presto encourage Miss Vanhomrigh to enter his house thus, by a back way, alone and unannounced?—Surely not.

Miss Vanhomrigh seated herself on a hard sofa, and Mrs. Johnson on a chair at a little distance. So these two women, who had for ten years played so dire a part in each other's lives, met for the first time face to face. They could not but look at each other with painful interest. Esther saw before her a woman who had reached middle life, with a face still handsome enough, but cold and hard; not that face bright with sparkling gaiety or sly humour or cheerful benevolence, with which Hetty Johnson charmed her social circle. There was a sense in which the look Mrs. Johnson wore at that moment was encouraging to her rival, for it lent a new probability to Swift's assertion that he had been only like an elder brother to her, and that she was jealous over him, as sisters sometimes are over brothers. Essie on the contrary, in the flush and simplicity of her emotion, looked unusually pretty, soft and girlish.

"What have you to say to me, madam?" asked Mrs. Johnson, with an icy calm that was not assumed; for a deep and bitter coldness seemed to rise from some hidden depths in her heart and freeze her whole nature, as she looked at this young woman, who, it seemed to her, had striven in the insolence of youth, wealth and position to rob another, one older and less fortunately situated, of her only treasure; and for a time had succeeded, and thereby for ever lessened the treasure's worth.

"I know not," returned Essie, forgetful of forms, of all except the fulfilment of her purpose. "That is, I know what I would say. Mrs. Johnson, you are a very old friend, almost a sister to the Dean, are you not?"

"I am no sister nor otherwise related to him, madam," answered Hetty, wilfully misunderstanding the question. "But, as is well known to his friends, he has been my kind protector and closest friend from my childhood till now."

"Then you must be well acquainted with his humour," returned Essie, "and aware 'tis a singular one. Oh, do not

mistake me," she added quickly, as Hetty looked up with a slight frown; "I know, and—— Heavens! how do I honour his great, his generous disposition. Was never, sure, a heart so tender to his friend, so kind to the unfortunate, so staunch to every cause that he deems just and true. No, no! I do not speak in dispraise of him."

A faint flush came to Mrs. Johnson's marble cheek, and her soft dark eyes glowed under their black brows. Irritable and sarcastic as she constantly was, she did not know the sensation of violent anger, of a passion that swelled the veins and made hot unmeasured words rush from the throbbing brain to the tongue. No doubt as a little child she had experienced it, but never as a mature woman. Now such anger rose within her, as Miss Vanhomrigh praised her own husband to her. But she controlled it.

"Madam," she said with studied calm, "I'll not affect to be made very proud by your commendations of the Dean, for you say but what his old friends have been saying these thirty or forty years. Yet 'tis perhaps as well I am here to listen to it rather than he, for though a divine, he is human, and the praises of so fine a young lady might make him vain."

Essie absorbed in the difficulty of coming to her point continued; "I praise him only because I cannot refrain from doing it—only because I hate to be forced to suspect a fault in him, and that fault—a want of candour. Madam, it seems you have known him well since he was a young man, tell me—on my honour I do not ask it idly—would he be likely to keep from you, from another, a secret that it would have been wiser, more just to tell them? I hate to think it possible, indeed I do."

"Madam," returned Mrs. Johnson, her voice trembling with anger, "excuse me, I am but a poor country-bred creature. It may be polite breeding would compel me to answer a question that to my simplicity appears exceedingly strange, seeing that the Dean is, as you must be aware, my most valued friend and benefactor. Well, I make no pretensions to be a fine lady, and am therefore free to say I would not discuss the Dean's faults, whether real or fancied, with my oldest acquaintance, much less with a complete stranger like yourself."

"Oh, for God's sake!" cried Essie, in too deadly earnest to admit offence, "do hear me. As you are a Christian woman, madam, restrain your anger—I cannot think 'tis just—and listen

to what I have to say. Pray do. It does concern you, though you may not think it."

Mrs. Johnson, impressed by the appeal, and ashamed of her passion, stood irresolute. She felt no fatal curiosity to hear the truth about Swift's relations to her rival, but on the contrary, shrank from confidences that might be painful and could have no practical result. Perhaps the chief reason why it roused her wrath to hear Miss Vanhomrigh boldly accuse him of want of candour, was because that was a trait in his character which she had been at pains to hide from herself, to explain away, since it had forced itself on her attention nine years ago. But Hetty Johnson was a good woman. Miss Vanhomrigh's manner of entrance and her immediate plunge into a subject of great delicacy, had naturally both startled and shocked her; yet to give way to passion, to trample rudely on one who stood before her as a suppliant, though that one had wronged her, this Hetty could not do. Besides there was something compelling in Esther's intensity of purpose.

"Madam," she said, speaking once more with composure, "you bid me as I am a Christian hear what you have to say. I am no enthusiast, yet Christian is a name I value, and I trust you do too, and that you do not make use of it for any vain or malicious purpose. But since my patience is of the shortest, and my friend Mrs. Dingley may at any moment join us, I beg you'll be brief. Sure, 'twere childish to make so much ado about such a question as you have asked. Be plain. How does the Dean want candour?"

Essie raised her eyes, fixed them on Mrs. Johnson and seemed about to speak, yet said nothing.

"What secret do you imagine he has to keep?" asked Hetty, with the impatience of pain.

Essie clasped her hands tightly together, and at length spoke falteringly and by a great effort.

"Most likely he has none—but I came hither to-day to ask him whether 'tis true what people say; whether he is a married man, or in any way bound—not free."

"Ah!" cried Hetty, and there was a pause. Then—"By what right, madam, would you have ventured to ask him such a question?"

"Tell me, tell me, can you answer it?" cried Essie.

"You have said it—I insist on learning your right, your motive before I answer," returned Hetty quickly.

"Madam," cried Essie, "I have no right—none that he would acknowledge, yet you will understand my motive, for you are a woman too! Give me a moment, and I will try to make it clear to you."

Leaning with one arm over the sofa and her handkerchief pressed to her lips she paused, looking not at Mrs. Johnson, but away into the deepening twilight of the room; and so after an uninterrupted silence she went on, but still intermittently—

"I have a friend, a kinswoman—I'll not tell you her name. When she was but sixteen years old the Dean took note of her; he commended her wit, and she had wit enough to be very proud of his praise. Years after that when he was in London—ah, you Dublin folk don't know yet how they sought after him in London!—he made a pastime of enlightening her folly, of teaching her to reason and distinguish. He that had the greatest and wittiest in the kingdom for his intimates, he condescended to be friends with her. Madam, you know him, gifted with what a happy genius, how charming in his benevolence to those he loves, how various in—well, well, you know!"

Mrs. Johnson had stiffened in her chair as these praises of Swift came out slowly, and ended with a sigh.

"'Tis enough—'twas but natural," Essie resumed with an effort, her voice deepening and steadying, "that she should love him. She loved him, madam. She loves him still. Yes, you can easily imagine, she loves him still; for what wretched pigmies must the common run of men look beside that image that she perpetually carries in her mind!"

"And Dr. Swift? Has he returned her passion?"

Mrs. Johnson spoke with unnatural calm. She had been listening to Miss Vanhomrigh with part of her attention, but as she listened new and painful thoughts had passed through her mind. How if she had made a mistake in allowing her whole life to be strictly bounded by Swift's rules, and meantime another woman had trampled on them, rushed in and taken the kingdom for her own? It was terrible to await the answer to this question, and terrible also to be compelled to give it; for there was not even a plain truth to fall back upon. Pride, her own ever-sanguine thoughts, and the growing doubt whether this icy woman opposite her could ever have loved even Swift, made an affirmative tremble upon Essie's lips. But was it true? Would *he* admit it had ever been so? No; he would be angry at the

imputation. And she had come hither scarcely at all for her own sake, but that she might at length behave with justice towards this woman, of whose position she had for years thought more than she had chosen to admit even to Molly, to whom she was now prepared to yield even her heart's blood. The struggle was short, but sharp.

Then—"No," she said faintly.

Mrs. Johnson, who had leaned back in her chair, sat up again, and spoke after a pause.

"Then, madam, 'tis plain that, whether the Dean be married or single, this young lady should abandon at once her—her unfortunate passion."

A harder word had risen to her lips, but she suppressed it. Like many just people, who have little to forgive themselves, Mrs. Johnson found it difficult to be generous, but she wished to be so.

"'Tis useless to persuade her," returned Essie, her head bowed and her eyes fixed on her own tightly-clasped hands. 'Nothing can do 't except the knowledge that he is bound to another by some tie of love and honour superior to the tender friendship"—the phrase pricked Hetty like a pin, for she knew it—"that he has often avowed for her. Is he so bound? Oh, madam, pray do answer me freely, for, though I honour marriage, I am not so much the slave of the world's opinion as to regard no other tie between man and woman as deserving of consideration. Tell me, I implore you!"

She raised her eyes to Mrs. Johnson's, who met them with a white stern face and an imperious gesture that commanded her to pause. Presto had P. P. T.'s word of honour that the fact of their marriage should never be hinted at. He had suggested last night that worldly motives were making her repent that promise. She would show him that at any rate she knew how to keep it.

"Madam," she said deliberately, "I know not what you would hint. The Dean is not a man to form any unlawful tie—you might have guessed as much. As to love, to the best of my belief—and you'll remember that I am his oldest friend—he has never once entertained that passion, not even at the age when few have the discretion to avoid it. The chief part of your question seems to be whether he is married. I can but say he has never told me so; but, on the contrary, often talked against marriage, especially the marriage of men advancing in

years. I have answered you, madam, as well as I am able, and beg you'll excuse me. 'Tis full time I returned to my lodgings."

"You have concealed nothing from me? Are you sure you have told me everything?" asked Essie earnestly, rising from the sofa.

Hetty rose too.

"I have answered you, madam, to the utmost of my power and my short patience. I heard a friend who is to walk home with me come into the house just now; you really must excuse me. Will you wait the Dean here?"

"No, no!" cried Essie, terrified. "Farewell, madam. I thank you for your patience, and ask your pardon for my singular conduct, which may well seem unpardonable."

She sighed, and drew her hood forward. Both ladies curtsied, and Miss Vanhomrigh left the room, leaving the door wide open in her haste.

Hetty did not immediately follow her; she sat down again. She seemed to have been sitting stone still for a long time, and certainly must have been so for several minutes, when a voice called her, low but clear.

"Mrs. Johnson."

Surely that woman was not still there; yet it was her voice. Hetty did not immediately reply.

"Mrs. Johnson," it came again, louder and more insistent.

Hetty walked slowly and reluctantly to the open door. Yes, Miss Vanhomrigh was still there. She stood just under the large lantern that hung in the middle of the 'square hall, with its handsome paving of great black and white marble slabs. Her face was very pale, paler than it had been before, and the lantern cast the shadow of her hood across her eyes. It made them look almost black, yet they gleamed out of the shadow.

"Mrs. Johnson," she repeated. Hetty moved a little nearer, yet not much beyond the lintel of the door.

"Listen," she said, and her voice though not loud was very clear, and had a strength and ring of command in it that Hetty had not heard before; "I am myself that woman, that most unhappy woman I spoke of. I appeal to you before God, as you hope for mercy, have mercy on me and on yourself! Tell me the truth. Are you married to Dr. Swift?"

Mrs. Johnson stood up white, transformed to stone, but with her eyes fronting that piercing gaze opposite, that seemed as though it would tear the heart out of her bosom. At length she

spoke and was aware that a little tremor ran through her, but her enunciation was clear, haughty, deliberate.

"No, madam, I am not. You have asked too much. Go! Leave this house!" and she pointed to the door, which was open, as though her strange visitor had once already gone out. Then the black figure vanished silently again into the outer dusk, this time to return no more.

Yet even before it had gone, Hetty had turned her back on it. Never, never before in all her life, in which reason had ever controlled emotion, had she experienced or imagined such a struggle as that which had but now torn her bosom. She trembled and stretched out her hands for support, as though she had received a blow, and so going blindly back into the dim library found herself suddenly yet gently, caught and supported in a man's arms.

"Dear, dearest P. P. T.," whispered Swift's voice close to her ear. "'Twas worthy, 'twas noble. Madwoman! How durst she come here? Ah, I thought you would not lie, you that hate a lie! And then I heard you do 't—and all for Presto's sake. Dear, brave P. P. T. How can he ever be sorry enough?"

"Let me go," she said faintly; "I am not well. Let me sit down." Then—"How did you come here?"

He seated himself on the sofa, and took her irresponsible hand.

"When I came in, Mrs. Brent told me there was some one with you in the library; so I went in there," pointing to a door communicating with the dining-parlour. "But I heard nothing, so presently I opened the door softly and stole in. That was how it happened. I never meant to spy on P. T., or that moon-struck creature either. Heaven knows how she came hither; 'twas not at my invitation. But I am very glad I heard P. P. T. tell her brave lie; else she would have kept the thing a secret, and never have allowed P. D. F. R. to know all her loyalty and goodness to him."

"Pray let Patrick order a coach," said Hetty; "I am not well. I wish to go to my lodgings."

"Poor dear Dallah! Let me go with you."

"No, no. Why should you? Dingley must be here somewhere. Pray call Patrick!"

And hurrying to the door again, Mrs. Johnson called out in a shrill, fretful voice, "Dingley, Dingley!" Dingley answered

from the distance, and Swift coming meekly forth, shouted to Patrick in an opposite direction.

"You won't let me come?" he asked.

"You are very good to offer it; but Dingley will take care of me."

"May I come to supper?"

"Faith, if you choose to sup with Dingley and eat her tripe. I am sick, and going to bed."

"May I come in the morning?" he asked almost timidly.

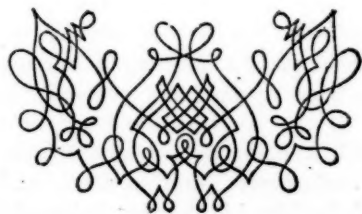
"I thought, Presto, 'twas our rule not to meet of a morning. I see no reason why you should come before dinner. Mr. Ford has sent us a hare, so you had best dine with us to-morrow."

"Dear, poor P. T.!" he said in a whisper, standing close to her, and looking down at her inscrutable face with wistful eyes; "she thinks it was my fault. It was not indeed—as I hope to be saved, it was none of Presto's fault."

"Don't!" she cried, with a quick look of pain. "Why will you talk about it? Let us forget it as soon as we can. Ah, here's Dingley! D. D., I am sick—we must ride home."

Dingley was voluble in finding reasons for Hetty's sickness, which ranged from the bit of lobster she had eaten last week to the magpie they had seen in the Phoenix Park that afternoon. Having satisfied herself that the cause was found, her anxiety was allayed. Patrick had caught a coach close by, and the Dean helped the ladies in, vainly trying to win a glance from P. P. T.'s averted eyes. When the coach had driven off he went back to the library, and finding his big ledger open, where Hetty had been copying his list, he shut it to with a mighty bang; and as it banged, he cursed Miss Essie aloud.

(To be concluded.)



THE FIRST ENGLISH FREE LIBRARY AND ITS FOUNDERS.



IF, as Cicero says, a library be the soul of a house, a public library is the soul of a city. It has been usually assumed that free public libraries are a modern institution, and that our unscholarly forefathers were without such sources of enlightenment. Possibly to a large extent they were so. "Our forefathers," declares Jack Cade, "had no book but the score and the tally ;" and he unjustly charges Lord Say with the iniquity of causing printing to be used, besides traitorously corrupting the youth of the realm by the erection of a grammar-school. "Moreover," he continues, addressing the same nobleman, "it shall be proved to thy face that thou hast men about thee that usually talk of a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no Christian can endure to hear."

Though there were nouns and verbs in Lord Say's time, Jack Cade's head had been mounted on London Bridge (A.D. 1450) a quarter of a century before Caxton had inserted them in the 'Dictes and notable wyse sayings of the Phylosophers,' the first book (A.D. 1477) printed in England. Perhaps even in Cade's time there were as many books as students, for though, as we shall see, there was at least one free library at this far back date, the books were not taken home to read, but were sources whence instruction was afforded by the ecclesiastical librarian to those eager for his teaching. At present, if all men are not born thinkers they are born readers, and a book is the best substitute for a mind. "It is the precious life-blood of a master spirit," says Milton, and in keeping with this bold figure we have heard it averred by an enthusiastic librarian that next in importance to the circulation of the blood is the circulation of books, the latter process being as needful for the intellectual life as the former for the physical.

Now, we know the name of the discoverer of the courses of the arterial fluid, but who was the originator of the first lending-library, or rather, who established the first free library in England has scarcely been a matter of literary curiosity. Forests of free public libraries are spreading over the land, the leaves of whose volumes are as innumerable as the leafage of the summer woods, and many of them as evanescent; but who planted the parent tree, even the oracle of all things, the latest edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' fails, at least with historical accuracy, to explain.

Beckman, who in his 'History of Inventions' has touched upon everything else, from cock-fighting to cataloguing, has not dealt with the subject of free libraries, which of course more or less existed before they came under the "Act." Isaac D'Israeli in his 'Curiosities of Literature' has made the like omission, though the question seems quite within his sphere. With regard to the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' (9th edition) we therein read under the article "Libraries" that the fine old library instituted by Humphrey Chetham in Manchester, in 1653, and which is still "housed in the old collegiate buildings where Raleigh was once entertained by Dr. Dee, might be said to be the first free library" in England.

Two centuries, however, before worthy Chetham had erected his free fountain of knowledge for thirsty souls, a grave fraternity known as the Guild of Kalendars had established a free library, for all comers, in connection with a church yet standing in one of the thoroughfares of Old Bristol. Kalendars, as a name, are more familiar to readers by the lying tales which Agib and others of his tribe of roving dervishes told to Haroun Alraschid, than by the mediæval bibliophiles of whom we speak. The latter were, however, so far similar to their Oriental namesakes that they were severed like them from parents, wife and children, relations and possessions, and were devoted to a religious life, though they did not wander about like the artful Arabians to live upon the bounty of those whom they made their dupes.

William Wyrcestre, the father of English antiquaries, a native of Bristol, writing about 1478, says that the foundation of the guild was authorised in A.D. 700 by the seal of Wolstan, Bishop of Worcester; but as we have no historical mention of Bristol itself being a settlement at so early a date, there may be some doubt cast upon the ancient manuscript whence Wyrcestre professes to have derived his statement. John Leland (*temp.*

Henry VIII.) speaks of the Kalendars as an established body about the year 1170; and when in 1216 Henry III. held a Parliament in Bristol, the deeds of the guild were inspected, and ratified on account of the antiquity and high character of the fraternity ("propter antiquitates et bonitates in eâ Gilda repertas") and Gualo, the Papal Legate, commended the Kalendars to the care of William de Blois, Bishop of Worcester, within whose diocese Bristol then lay. It was the office of the Kalendars to record local events and such general affairs as were thought worthy of commemoration, whence their name. They consisted of clergy and laity, even women being admitted to their Order.

There is a curious volume, the original manuscript of which yet exists in the Town Chamber of Bristol, written by Robart Ricart, one of the Kalendar Brotherhood, and Town Clerk of Bristol in the time of Edward IV., which volume has been edited by Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith for the Camden Society. In the general oath of the Mayor on taking office as given by Ricart, that worshipful chief magistrate, after declaring his intention to do his "entire pain and diligence to put away, cease and destroy, all manner (of) heresies and errors, cleped openly lollardries," within his "bailly, from time to time" with all his power, makes special profession of his intention to "be helping, supporting and favouring to the Prior and his brethren the priests of the house of Kalendars of Bristowe, in all things (he says) that I may lawfully and honestly do of right, as her very patron, to the confirmation and defence of the rents, lands and tenements of the same house; saving every man's right." This shows how important a body the Kalendars, locally, were in the centuries of their existence; but they are now as completely gone as their namesakes of Bagdad.

Happily for the antiquary, however, the old Church of the Kalendars yet substantially exists; but it is so outwardly transformed, with its Italian campanile of the last century for the earlier Gothic tower, that the cloistral brotherhood, could they revisit their former scenes, might pass it by unrecognized. Looking curiously within the western doorway, should they fortunately find it unlocked, they might indeed see some features with which they had been familiar. During seven centuries four short stout piers with cushion capitals of the Norman patterns have stood and yet stand erect, two on either side of the entrance of the nave. The two on the north side formerly helped to

support a chamber which contained the library of the brethren, and the two to the south the house of the prior, which yet exists in modernised form. The church is situated opposite the present Council House, and close to the Exchange, a building which superseded what was locally known as the Tolsey, a covered portico open to the street but reared against the north aisle of the same church, with the roof running beneath the clerestory windows. Here the old merchant princes negotiated their sales, and like Salarino on the Rialto, the adventurous traders who discussed their projects and recounted events might in glancing at the sacred walls beside them have had their thoughts wafted away in boisterous weather to their reeling vessels freighted with costly argosies on the traitorous deep. This is the "Tolesell" which has been commemorated in Sir Walter Scott's 'Pirate,' where we are told old Clem Cleveland of College Green, Bristol, was father of the Captain of the *Good Hope* of that city, and was "well known on the Tolesell." So the son tells Mordaunt, when speaking of the fine luck his vessel had on the Spanish main, both with commerce and privateering. But our present interest is with the library which was storied above the Tolsey at the north-west end of Al Hallowen or All Saints Church. Exclusive of the Tolsey at the basement of the north aisle, the entire building comprised a parish church, which included the chapel of the Kalendars, with the college and library of the same body, and the house of their prior, from an inner apartment of which latter a secret view of the interior of the church is yet obtained. Judging from the Italian cupola as seen from the street, the church might have been erected in the last century; but the windows of the north aisle indicate the style of that portion to date as far back as the 15th century, while the circular piers of the interior already mentioned are about three centuries earlier still. Opening from the depressed narthex, as it might be called, formed by these piers with their superstructure, is a 15th-century building of loftier elevation, with light clustered columns, pointed arches and broad windows of Perpendicular tracery. Of late years the walls and roof have been damasked with fanciful colouring in supposed revival of the mediæval appearance of the sacred place. But the exuberant ecclesiastical life of olden days as recorded in the vestry archives is in curious contrast with present deadness within the walls. According to modern notions, or at least practice, overmuch devotion is as unwholesome to the soul as excess of food to the physical system; and closed doors of churches are more

suitd to temperate habits of worship than open ones. Such continual prayer and praise were no doubt

"More fitted for the cloudy night
Of Popery than Gospel light."

It was ordered by Wolstan, Bishop of Worcester, who in visitation of this part of his diocese, July 10, 1340, examined the ancient rules of the College, that a prior in priest's orders should be chosen by the majority of the chaplains and lay brethren, without the solemnity of confirmation, consecration or benediction of superiors, and eight chaplains who were not bound by monastic rules, were to be joined with him to celebrate for departed brethren and benefactors every day. By an ordinance of John Carpenter, Bishop of Worcester, A.D. 1464, the Prior was to reside in the college, and take charge of a certain library newly erected at the Bishop's expense, so that every festival day from seven to eleven in the forenoon admission should be freely allowed to all desirous of consulting the Prior, to read a public lecture every week in the library, and elucidate obscure places of Scripture as well as he could to those desirous of his teachings. This fact helps to refute the popular superstition that piety was first invented at the Reformation, and that Luther was the first religious man; inasmuch as it supplies evidence against the evangelical belief that the Bible was a lightly valued book in old days, and restrained from the knowledge of the community. Lest, through negligence or accident, the books should be lost, it was ordered that three catalogues of them should be kept; one to remain with the Dean of Augustinian Canons, whose 14th-century church is now Bristol Cathedral, another with the Mayor for the time being, and the third with the Prior himself. Unfortunately, they are all three lost. The Bishop also enjoined that there should be a due collation of all the books with the catalogues by the Dean, the Prior, and another appointed by the Mayor, between the feast of St. Michael and of All Saints; and if it should happen that through the neglect of the Prior some book should be carried out of the library, or in any way alienated or stolen, the Prior was to be answerable for the book under a penalty of forty shillings above its actual value; and if he were unable to restore the book, then he was to pay its value and forty shillings in addition, twenty shillings to the Mayor and the rest in provision of chains for the books, or otherwise for the benefit of the library. To the Prior, for his attention to the library was to be paid annually by the Kalendars' guild

ten pounds in quarterly portions. If the Prior absent himself from his duties for some honest cause, he was to declare the reason, to be approved or not by the Bishop or the Mayor, so that he be not absent more than a month altogether in the year, unless for some urgent cause to be accepted as sufficient by the Bishop or the Mayor; and then in his absence the senior brother would have the keeping of the library. At his institution the Prior was to swear obedience to the requirements of his office, and no prior was ever to obtain release from the ordinances he had sworn to observe, under penalty of privation. This form of installation was signed by John Harlowe, prior, and John Shipward, mayor, in expression of their consent.

It may therefore be concluded that as early as A.D. 1464 a library was established in Bristol, to which free access was granted to the townsmen, and that to increase its usefulness, free lectures were delivered within its walls.

It was in this year of the evil days of King Henry VI. that his heroic Queen once more headed her army, and, returning from Scotland, was again joined by Somerset and the Percies, only to be again routed by the victorious Edward of the White Rose, to meet whom she had marched. But the Kalendar Prior, in his cloistral book-room, calmly turned the leaves of his fair-penned volumes, undisturbed by civil and domestic treason; only the footsteps now and then, and the voice of some earnest seeker after knowledge breaking upon his quietude. It was but old-fashioned scholarship that he taught; he showed the paths the saints had trod; and cared little for the philosophers of the earth, the education of the heart being more regarded than that of the intellect and senses.

Among the Church muniments is a venerable tome in the handwriting of the brotherhood themselves, which gives so curious a picture of the ecclesiastical regulations and workings of a religious guild of the 15th century, that a few extracts from it in illustration of the internal life of the Kalendars may be worth attention. Records of benefactors to the church are prominent among the entries, the homely old Saxon phrase of "good-doers" being assigned to those whose bounty to the fraternity had earned them a place in the memorial. All Hallowtide was the season for calling men's good deeds to remembrance, the invocation of blessings on the "sowles" of such being contrasted with the equally devout, though not less interested supplication, that those whose generosity towards the Church had been

defective, or whose actions, on account of some imputed wrong to the Church, did not smell sweet and blossom in the dust, or in the field of this life, might find place for repentance ; the burden of the aspiration in their case being "God amende" them. In the persons of good-doers the priors of the community and the vicars of All Saints, who were generally elected from the priors, are conspicuous for their liberal gifts or beneficial deeds. "Where it hath been of a laudable custom of long continuance used," announces the solemn priest in the "General Mynde," or yearly commemoration, "that on this day, that is to say, the Sunday before Ash Wenesday (Ax Wensday) the names of good doers and well willers by whom tenements, buildings, jewels, books, chalices, vastments, and what divers other ornaments and goods as followeth hath been given unto the Church unto the honour and worship of Almighty God, and increasing of divine service, to be rehearsed and showed yearly unto you by name be they man or woman : and what benefits they did for themselves and for their friends and for others by their lifetimes, and what they left for them to be done after their days that they shall not be forgotten, but be had in remembrance and be prayed for of all the parish that be now, and of all them that be to come, and also for an example to all ye that be now living that ye may likewise to do for yourselves and for your friends while ye be in this world that after this transitory life ye may be had in the number of good-doers rehearsed by name, and in the special prayers of Christian people in time coming, that by the infinite mercy of Allmighty God, by the intercession of our blessed Lady and of all blessed saints of heaven, in whose honour and worship this church is dedicate, ye may come to your everlasting bliss and the joy that our blessed Lord hath redeemed you unto. Amen."

A long list of the good doers, intermixed with others whose doings were not good, then follows, headed by Robert the Girdler. Under the date 1488 we find :—

"In primis he (Roger the Girdler) gave unto the said Church unto the worship of the precious and glorious sacrament to be borne in a cup of silver gilt within and without, with a cover and a crucifix on the head, with precious stones worshipfully endued, and one little cup and one spoon : both ygilt, weighing XLV ounces. And that this said cup, cup and spoon be not aliened, sold, nor yet broken under pain of cursing as it appeareth by writing under the Dean's seal. God have mercy on his sowle, Amen."

Alice Chester, also, was deservedly held in remembrance for her good works. She caused to be made a carved tabernacle with a "Trinity" in the middle over the image of Jesus, and "on her own cost let gild it full worshipfully with a cloth hanging before to be drawn at certain times, when it shall please the vicar and the paryshons."

"Moreover the said Alice two years before her decease, being in good prosperity and health of body, considering the rood-loft of this church was nothing of beauty, she taking to her council the worshipful of this parish, with others having best understanding and rights in carving, to the honour and worship of Almighty God and His saints, and of her special devotion unto this church, hath let to be made a new rood-loft in carved work, fulfilled with XXII images, on her own proper cost, of the which images be a Trinity in the middle, and Christopher in the north side and a Michael in the south side; and beside is the two pillars bearing up the loft, every one having four houses set on carve work, within every house an image."

These were glorious days of Church building. The majestic fane of St. Mary Redcliff had just added a new dignity to Gothic architecture, and the noble tower of St. Stephen's, which still lifts its regal head a few paces from All Saints, was about to be commenced. Also Sir John Gyllard, Prior of the Kalendaries ("Sir," it should be remembered, was in old days a clerical as well as a knightly prefix), who died in 1451, spent the large sum of £227 in building anew the Chapel of St. Mary in the north or Jesus aisle of his church, "worshipfully" glazing the same aisle with the story of *Te Deum Laudamus*. He also constructed a large room "over the said chapel of Our Lady, for an easement unto the Prior and his brethren." This incorporated the Library.

Another notable benefactor was William Wytheney, who had "let, ordeyn, and let made at his own cost a memorial that every man should remember his own death, that is to say, the Dawnse of Powlys, the which cost XVIII^l. God have mercy on his sowle. Amen." It seems uncertain what was the character of this *Dance of Paul's*; it could hardly have been a book, for it appears to have been suspended and unrolled twice a year, so that it may be inferred to have been a large picture or piece of tapestry of the *Dance of Death* school of religious art. The fraternity were, however, rich in illuminated books, one of which, a rarely beautiful *Primer*, which was given by the same worthy to whom they

were indebted the *Dance of Paul's*. This was so precious a volume that for security it was kept within a grating under Saint Christopher's image in the rood-loft. In defiance of Christopher and his saintly protection, the book was stolen, the robbers proving to be some pilgrims who, previously to their setting out to the shrine of St. James at Compostella, had thus cheaply provided themselves with an offering worthy of his spiritual excellence. The precious primer was traced and brought back. Once more it was enclosed within a grating, but was again stolen, and never after recovered.

The vestry book whence our extracts are taken was written by the hand of Sir Maurice Hardwick, who was vicar in 1455, "for to put in the names of the good doers and the names of the wardens of the Church, and what good they did in their days, that they may yearly be prayed for."

This interesting library was destroyed by fire in 1466 through the carelessness of a drunken "point-maker," two adjoining houses against the steeple of the church being at the same time burnt down. It may be of interest to observe that William Rowley, a name made famous by Chatterton, was one of the wardens in that year. He died in 1488.

On the Feast of All Saints it was customary for the Mayor and Councilmen to pay their devotions at the church we are speaking of. On that day, after dinner, says the old Kalendar brother, Ricart, the Town Clerk, who no doubt would be of the company, these civic dignitaries assembled at the Tolsey, and "with many other gentils and worshipful commoners, such as appereth there at that time, from thence passed into All Hallowsen Church, there to offer." They then walked "unto the mayor's place, there to have their fires and their drinkings with spiced cake-bread and sundry wines, the cups merrily serving about the house, and then from thence every man departing unto his parish church to evensong."

JOHN TAYLOR.



THE ROMANCE OF MARY MACADAM.

PART I.

BY EDWARD A. ARNOLD.

[IN a famous Peerage Case that was decided not many years ago, the successful petitioner based his claim upon descent from a certain Captain M—, an officer in the British army, who died in America towards the close of the eighteenth century. The case hung upon the legitimacy of Captain M—'s children, and it was with the utmost difficulty that sufficient evidence was compiled from the scanty records of the time, to prove the fact of his marriage with Miss Mary MacAdam. Although considerable interest attached to her romantic story, only a bare outline of her life could be traced at the trial; but if the curious manuscript, (purporting to be a record or journal penned by the lady herself,) which has fallen into the hands of the present writer, had then been accessible, it would have afforded a singular confirmation of the petitioner's case.

In the task of deciphering and preparing the MS. for publication it has been impossible to avoid a medley of archaic and modern terms of expression, which, it is feared, may detract to some extent from the freshness of the original; but for this the compiler must plead his own inexperience, and he can only hope that the interest of the narrative may cover any deficiency in dealing with it.—E. A. A.]

I.

HAVE I never shown you where Tuthill's Farm lies, yonder across Hudson, in the forest-clearing by the ferry? It seems but yesterday (though 'tis nigh twenty years ago!) that I was running down to the shore there, a girl of ten, to meet my father on his passage from the city. He used to give lessons in Fence to the English officers of the garrison; his skill in the art was noted, and all were eager to learn from Colonel McAdam. They called him "Chieftain," for it was no secret that if the King enjoyed his own again, my father, instead of retiring to the Colonies, would have remained in Scotland to head his clan in peace, as he had bravely led them in the van at Culloden.

At the time of our flight I was a mere baby, and in later years I could rarely persuade my father to speak of that terrible time. "You will have troubles of your own to think about soon

enough," he used to say ; and God knows how true his words proved ! but even now a shudder comes over me as I fancy him returning from the battle which ruined his fortunes, only to be greeted with the news of his wife's death, and to find sorrow and desolation reigning in the house.

Utterly careless of his own safety, and roused with difficulty from an agony of grief, he was at length induced by the interposition of friends to fly the country ere it was too late, and, taking me with him, to embark on a Dundee whaler, whose captain agreed to steer for the Sound of New York before proceeding Northwards.

I have never heard how we made acquaintance at Tuthill's Farm ; I suppose the life there seemed so natural that I never questioned it, until opportunity for learning was lost. Happy in the present, a child regards not the past ; the years rolled by so quietly and smoothly that my imagination could hardly have pictured a different existence, even had memory suggested it ; but memory was bounded by the barrier of sea in front and sombre forest behind, wandering gaily indeed through a labyrinth of homely scenes, only to lose the clue at the threshold of a wider vision.

I knew that the people were not my people, the home not my home, the other children not my father's ; but I knew not how or why we had come there, or whence or when ; and as year after year passed leaving us undisturbed, I began to believe the skies would fall before change were possible at Tuthill's Farm. All we looked forward to was the variety of the seasons ; to the summer and the long harvest days, when the sea shone like glass beneath the trembling haze which dimmed the city from our view, and the deepest forest glades were scarcely proof against the onslaught of noontide rays. Then came glorious autumn—brightness without heat—when the great trees donned their loveliest harmonies of colour, in hues all blended, but every leaf embroidered with King Frost's delicate livery, ere they dropped silently and reluctantly to the muffled earth. Winter succeeded, and waiting for the spring—spring heralded by torrents of rain, and fogs, and thaw. Hudson rushed down in turgid flood from the uplands, bearing huge ice-rafts which loomed past mysteriously, tempting embarkation on a weird voyage into the unknown. At that season passage to the city became dangerous, and I loved the thaw for keeping my father at home sometimes for weeks together. Thus simple were the changes rung on the bells of Time at Tuthill's Farm.

Yet stirring events were afoot in those days ; only a faint echo came wafted over the water to our tranquil home, of wars and rumours of wars, with which the air of the city was rife ; but we knew that there was constant plotting and planning to thwart the King's Government, and that His Majesty's loyal province of New York was little better than a hot-bed of discontent, kept in check only by fear of the French, upon whom even more hatred was lavished than upon the detested Lords of Trade ; thus there was never any real peace in the city, for in proportion as France lost ground in the North, the anti-English feeling and craving for independence was fomented in the South ; petulant petitions and sullen obstruction of authority alternated with occasional rioting and open defiance ; while the rare intervals, during which harmony seemed to prevail between the citizens and the Government, could plainly be traced to some reverse of the troops on the frontier, impelling collective action in face of a common foe.

But worse than all the troubles born of this Nationalistic spirit were the constant alarms from the Indians. The restrictions in trade, harassing and vexatious as they were, only touched men's pockets ; the Indians threatened their lives, and aroused a savage indignation at the news of bloody massacres, which completely cast into the shade mere mercenary grievances. Now it was some enterprising settler exploiting an outlying district, who was attacked and murdered with his whole family, only a heap of charred ruins remaining to mark the site of his homestead. Now it was a party of merchants or trappers with their wares on the way to Ontario, assailed at a portage or during the night halt, whose fate was surmised from their never reaching the lakes, or ascertained months afterwards by the chance discovery of some remnant of the loot in an Indian village. Even the stockade forts planted in the wilds for the encouragement of traders afforded no adequate protection against the ruthless cunning of the savages, and relief parties, hastily despatched on the first tidings of a siege, often arrived only to be greeted by the hideous spectacle of their comrades' scalped heads impaled in ghastly mockery upon the palisades raised for defence.

Indeed there were few families in the city but could reckon some of their kinsfolk exposed to actual danger from the Indians ; the fate which overtook one was felt to impend over all ; and every fresh outrage enhanced the implacable hatred and hostility between the White man and the Red. Moreover, there

was an additional sting in the thought that the Indians were the sole bar to unlimited extension of boundaries, and that they blocked out the Colonists from the full enjoyment of their charter-bestowed privileges to possess the lands westward to the Pacific; for little though the true import of this concession was realized, there was a general eagerness to push exploration far beyond existing limits, in the search after new trade-routes and waterways to enrich settlers at the expense of their savage and ignorant neighbours.

That the Indians received encouragement and even rewards from the French for their outrages upon our people, was a matter of ordinary assertion; for my part, it seems as easy to suppose that the loss of lands and hunting-grounds wrested by the daily increasing power of the strangers on the coast, sufficiently accounted for intense antipathy towards the invaders; while the very fact of a tribe's existence being jeopardized by English conquests caused it to turn a favourable ear to the French in Canada, whose presence afforded equal facilities for trading, without risk of encroachment.

Be the reason what it may, there is no doubt that the French were saddled with much of the odium attaching to the Indian massacres, whether they really sowed the seeds or not, and an absorbing passion for their expulsion from America gradually developed itself. Troubles with the Indians, men argued, would then vanish, and the way be cleared for dealing with the English restrictions on trade, unembarrassed, in the event of a crisis, by the neighbourhood of a second power ready to take the place of the British garrisons whenever they might be withdrawn or compelled to retire.

But it was only far-seeing people who carried the argument to this conclusion. The majority halted at the stage of attributing every misfortune to the French, and thus there sprang up a spurious kind of loyalty, which almost blossomed into enthusiasm on occasion. So when the news got abroad that gallant Colonel Wolfe had come to drive the enemy out of Canada, every citizen was loud in his welcome, and wished his expedition God-speed, with fervent prayers for its success.

All this we learned piece-meal from my father's talks with Mr. Tuthill. Seldom indeed did he allow himself to discuss at home the affairs of the city, pictured in our childish imagination as a fairy palace of delights and forbidden joys after which we increasingly hankered; every chance word let fall in our hearing

we eagerly treasured up and chattered over long afterwards ; fancy helped to fill the gaps in our intelligence, and current events, from the halo of mystery surrounding them, assumed in our eyes an importance doubtless merited, but rarely bestowed by heedless children ; indeed, I have noticed among older people that familiarity with stirring scenes is very apt to breed carelessness, if not contempt.

We had heard something of Colonel Wolfe's prowess, and at once dubbed him the great champion who was to deliver America from the wicked French, and utterly conquer the Indians. All summer, occasional tidings from the war kept us thrilled with expectation, and when the siege of Quebec was begun, in my excitement I ventured so far as to ask my father one day how matters were faring. I remember now his look of wonder at my knowing or caring about the campaign. It seemed as if he had suddenly awoke to a knowledge of my age, and through my habit of concealing interest in topics which he studiously avoided, he still thought me a child of six years old instead of an inquisitive girl of sixteen. He began to question me as to how much I knew, and smiling at last at my mingled facts and fancies, he promised that since I had gleaned so well I should henceforth reap the fruits of knowledge ; and from that time forward, not a day passed without his telling me what he heard in the city, carefully sifting the rumours, and directing me to the few grains of truth among them.

Until then I had never really known my father ; he had always looked upon and conversed with me as a child, which, in my own estimation at least, I had long ceased to be ! There is nothing which prevents confidence or affection more than a sense of being looked down upon ; but I now believe that my father had purposely abstained from arousing my interest in public affairs, recollecting the calamities entailed by his own ill-fated participation in them ; and yet he retained enough of his old fervour, to care little for any one who could not feel the excitement of the times.

But the barrier between us was completely broken down at last ; seeing the impossibility of repressing my thirst for knowledge, he allowed himself to show a pleasure and pride in my enthusiasm which vastly stimulated it.

All I heard was faithfully retailed to the younger Tuthills, and from living in gross ignorance of everything outside the Farm, our whole household became fired with intense interest in

every movement of troops on the frontier, or of revolutionary import in the city.

At length came the great news of the capture of Quebec, attended by the glorious victory for our arms in a battle hardly lost and hardly won at the expense of two brave generals' lives. We grieved, indeed, more than we rejoiced, for time had only confirmed our hero-worship ; but in the city the death of Wolfe was almost forgotten in exuberant joy at the defeat of the French, and preparations for giving a reception of unparalleled magnificence to the victorious troops on their return.

Among all the festivities designed to mark the importance of the event, none was looked forward to with greater eagerness than the concluding ceremony of burning the French King and the commanders of his Canadian army in effigy over a huge bonfire ; at this spectacle the soldiers lately returned were to assist ; though few in number, their presence, aided by the thought of their prowess, was expected to raise to fever pitch the excitement always shown by the citizens on occasions of public rejoicing. The sight of illuminations and bonfires seemed invariably to give the spur to loyalty, and were freely resorted to by Governors of the Province with that intent ; sometimes indeed upon pretexts so flimsy that nobody knew or cared about the anniversary commemorated, but never without adding considerably to the Governor's personal popularity.

On the present occasion, however, it would be difficult for enthusiasm to magnify unduly the real value of the achievement, for the conquest of Canada, which now seemed certain, hoped and fought for, as it had been, through years of baffling disappointment, with an obstinate perseverance that ignored defeats, was a prize well worthy of all the exultation naturally and abundantly provoked by final success.

It was arranged that the troops should be escorted to the scene of the bonfire by an enormous torch-light procession of citizens. The illumination of every house along the route was a matter of course ; in this respect, indeed, discretion was nominally left to the occupants, but an outward show of sympathy was effectively secured by a time-honoured though lawless custom. Wherever a house remained dark, the procession would halt and demand admission, by force, if necessary ; a contingent of torch-bearers was installed as a garrison, and the luckless inmates were obliged to join the ranks outside, leaving their property to the not over-tender mercies of the excited braves. Little redress

was obtainable from the authorities ; such an evident token of disloyalty was held to merit the ensuing visitation ; so peaceable householders generally contented themselves with a grumbling protest, and fell in with the humour of the day : whereby the magnificence of the illuminations was greatly enhanced, if naught else.

After much entreaty, we prevailed upon my father and Mr. Tuthill to promise us a visit to the city on the great day. Esther and Jane Tuthill were nearly as old as myself, but none of us had ever crossed the Hudson. Indeed I do not think we should have stirred from the farm precincts to this day, through lack of courage to ask so vast a favour, had not the novel bond of a common interest emboldened us to make the request, and disposed my father to acquiesce in our witnessing this visible triumph of a cause so dear to all our hearts.

At last the day arrived ; it was past noon when we started, our ears tingling in the keen frosty air, as we walked down to the ferry-boat for our first voyage ; a slight nervousness at being actually afloat and losing touch of the land soon vanished in the excitement of nearing the city, which well-nigh involved us in the penalty of rashness for making too great haste to leap on shore.

How well I remember that afternoon's walk through the city ! Everything seemed so new and strange that my mind could not keep pace with my eyes ; and I despaired of being able to observe one half the wondrous sights which I might not have another opportunity of inspecting for years to come. I was confused by the numbers of people and rows of houses and stores, which appeared marvellous to one accustomed to the solitudes of the Farm ; and the crowd in the streets that day was unusual even for New York.

Towards dusk we made for the house of one of my father's friends, a Mr. Edmiston, whence we were to view the procession before returning late at night to the farm. The Edmistons were genuine loyalists, and were making great preparations for a brilliant illumination, so that our help was welcome in the arrangement of the numerous lanterns and candles, fixing the coloured shades, and displaying everything to the best advantage. It was a task that took time, a task, moreover, that was doubled by the mischievous pranks of the youngest child of the house, a little rogue who seemed to take an especial delight in hindering us, and was always hiding the lanterns or moving them

to places where they would make no show ; threats and coaxing were equally useless, but at length he appeared suddenly tired of making mischief, and allowed us to finish the work in peace.

Our preparations had not been long completed before we heard drums in the distance announcing the march of the procession. In the houses opposite, lights were already blazing, but Mr. Edmiston was frugal as well as loyal, and restrained our ardour to the last moment. At length a nearer burst of music warned us against delay, and seizing tapers, we hurried to our allotted posts. A thrill of pleasure possessed me at the thought of contributing with my own hand to do honour to the victorious army ; I flew along the passage to the furthest lantern at a speed which almost extinguished the taper ; but shading it from the draught, I applied it carefully to the wick, when, oh horror ! no answering flame leaped up. In vain I tried, again, and yet again ; in despair I turned to the next lamp ; the same result : no better with a third, a fourth, a fifth ; nothing but spluttering oil and the dim taper's glimmer mocked my endeavours. The procession, I could hear, was close at hand ; everlasting shame must rest upon me if this window were alone left dark ; yet, what to do ? Doubtless the fault lay in my stupidity, and I must go and confess, to my bitter disgrace, having failed in the task so simple. Well, 'twas no good to wait ! Back I rushed in tears to the kitchen, ready to die rather than face the others whom I saw collected before me. On entering, I perceived at once from their looks that something serious had happened. Few words were needed to explain—not a single lamp or candle in the house had been lighted ; mine were but a sample of all !

A thought flashed across me : "Where is that child ?" I asked. We called—no answer ; he was not in the room, though no one had missed him. Then we all felt, remembering his curious spite against the illuminations, that this was the little imp's handiwork ; just as we hoped his mischief was at an end, he had doubtless gone round and damped everything !

At any other time we might perhaps have laughed over such a piece of folly, but just now we felt ready to aid Mr. Edmiston in the execution of a muttered vow to flay the young scamp alive when he caught him ; for if the mob found the house dark, it was impossible to reckon upon their good behaviour.

My father instantly volunteered to seek help from the neighbours ; but they, good folks, held fast to their own, and would part with none of their lamps ; barely enough for themselves

they declared; in truth I think they were well pleased at misfortune having overtaken Mr. Edmiston, whose energy had so often before cast their efforts into the shade.

We still clung to the hope that the mob might recognize the house as one always conspicuous for a loyal display, and attribute the present contrast to unforeseen accident rather than intention; but the thought gave scant comfort, for who, after all, could expect a crowd, inflamed by drink and the excitement of the march, to take count of this house or that in the darkness on such an occasion. The suspense could not be long; knots of men were fast collecting in the street, and we could overhear many ill-natured sneers and even threats among the loungers; from these, however, no actual violence need be feared, such as seemed imminent when the front ranks of the procession came up. But Mr. Edmiston straightway threw open the house door and stood waving his hat and shouting "God save the King!" with so fine an air, that the foremost torch-bearers, anxious, no doubt, to maintain their position of honour, passed on without stopping to molest us further than by hurling a couple of torches at the house, to give Mr. Edmiston, as they said, something to use his bellows upon!

The procession was divided into several portions, each composed of a body of soldiers, with a civilian escort. Five of these had already passed us, but evidently with increasing reluctance, and difficulty in advancing caused by halts and blocks in front. On the appearance of the sixth division we immediately perceived that it contained some of the wilder spirits bent on mischief. "Here's a proper kennel for French curs!" cried one; "'Tis an old badger that needs drawing," answered another; "See, he's half out of the hole already," pointing to poor Mr. Edmiston on guard in the doorway. Indeed, the general attitude of the mob now became so dangerous, that our host's courage rapidly failed him, and at length he fled back into the house for shelter, closing the door upon the angry crowd. This action was the signal for a frantic yell and movement to attack us; in a moment we heard a crash against the door. Mr. Edmiston in his hasty retreat had failed to secure the bolts, and it burst open, admitting a throng of riotous ruffians. The horrible flare and smoke of torches, the shouting, and threats to burn the house down over our heads were terrible beyond measure. My father had tried in vain to stem the tide of assailants. I lost sight of him, and was hopelessly looking round for some hiding-place,

when I suddenly felt myself seized by two of the ruffians. Easily overcoming my struggles, they dragged me out of the house, to what awful fate I knew not. The cold night-air forbade swooning, and condemned me to the most intense torture of mind and body. Even the sight of so furious a mob was terrible enough; but now I was exposed a helpless victim to their worst passions, expecting every moment to be trampled or torn to death.

Wrought to extreme agony by the thought of my father's probable murder, writhing under the brutal jests of my captors, and the painful blows I received as they pushed roughly through the thickest of the surging mass, I should surely soon have been bereft of reason, if not of life.

But suddenly I felt the ruffians loosen their grasp and stagger back. I had hardly time to find my own footing, before I saw them reeling and falling heavily to the ground, while the crowd sheepishly slunk away, cursed for cowards all by a commanding voice that threatened a short shrift and long rope for every one of them.

Then I heard myself addressed, with assurance of safety and questions as to my presence among the rogues without an escort. But even the strong shield of an English uniform could not immediately dispel my terror, and I could only stammer out a few halting words about the raid on Mr. Edmiston's house. My protector, however, cut explanation short, and gently taking me in his arms, strode on the instant, through the yielding crowd, to the door. There he set me down, and we entered together. To my surprise, the parlour was empty. Hastening again into the street, he returned, followed by half-a-dozen soldiers, whom he had found still sober enough to recognize and obey an officer. Two were posted at the door, with orders to let no one pass in or out; with the others, he approached the kitchen—to trap the rats, as he said.

The scene there puzzled me. The room was full of men, who had evidently discovered Mr. Edmiston's store of spirits, but retained sufficient self-control to preserve the semblance of an orderly attitude; all round the sides of the room they had ranged themselves, save where the line was broken by the big oak table pushed against the wall, to form a platform upon which a few of the most active had mounted to harangue their comrades. In the middle, on a couple of benches, sat the victims, all suffering evidently from wounds or terror. There was my father, his face horribly disfigured with blood, and Mr. Edmiston almost palsied with fright; the Tuthill girls looking ghastly white, and

the younger children of the house sobbing and crying their eyes out.

Then it dawned upon me that this was a Court of mock justice, presided over by Judge Lynch, and I shuddered at the thought of the probable fate in store for the accused, had not my own fortunate rescue proved the means of delivering them. Even now I felt great anxiety, for there were some twenty or thirty men assembled against us, and the odds were large.

Evidently our entrance was quite unexpected. The speakers on the platform, before they could recover from their surprise, were seized by the soldiers; while the rest, like cowards, instinctively began to beat a retreat towards the door, on finding themselves confronted by the King's uniform.

"Nay!" exclaimed the officer, "not quite so fast, my fine friends. I must have your names for the Governor, that he may learn what loyal and faithful citizens you are, and reward you suitably for this evening's work!"

Spoken to the accompaniment of a drawn sword, these words had their effect, and slowly, one by one, the ruffians passed out, till none were left but the ringleaders.

"To gaol with those scoundrels!" was the next order. "We'll deal with them to-morrow."

Then, turning to my father, our preserver angrily demanded an explanation of the riotous scene that had called for interference.

"Now, sir, perhaps you will condescend to enlighten me as to your part in this disturbance. Here am I, His Majesty's Captain of Foot, kept waiting upon the humour of a brawling mob, as if I were the sheriff's officer to preserve order in citizens' dwellings, and keep silly girls out of harm's way; and all, forsooth, to warrant a fool's claim to play the rebel in this loyal city without let or hindrance if he be so minded! Why, sir, had I not chanced on the spot, this young lady would assuredly have been murdered outright, your house wrecked, and yourself in all probability swinging from the nearest tree, a very scandal to His Majesty's orderly government! How dare you thus flaunt your infernal treason in people's faces, ready, I suppose, to convict them of sympathy if they disregard, and turbulence if they punish it as it deserves? Beware, sir; a second offence of this sort may not be condoned, even if it escapes Lynch justice!

"For your sake, madam," he continued, turning with a low bow to me, "I profoundly regret what has occurred; allow me to express my satisfaction at having been the lucky means of

saving you from indignities to which the folly of others has exposed you, and to assure you that you will always command my services."

I had not the courage to make reply to this address; nor indeed had any one time to do so, for he turned on his heel and left the house before even my father could make answer, either to thank him for our rescue, or refute the groundless charge of disloyalty.

The disappearance of danger seemed to bring small comfort to poor Mr. Edmiston, who sat in silent despair surveying the wreck of his furniture, and quite overwhelmed by misfortune. In vain we tried to rouse him with the consolation of safety; but at length, finding all efforts fruitless, my father, though still weak from his ill-usage, decided that we should stay no longer. Sadly then we left the house which we had entered so gaily only a few hours ago, and trudged over the snow to the ferry.

The street was empty and quiet enough; yet still the six soldiers stood there on guard, in case of renewed disturbance, proving the officer kinder than his words. But all the city had flocked to the bonfire, just then at its height, to judge by the ruddy glow in the sky, and a few flickering tongues of flame we could see spurting above the dark outline of houses as we crossed the river.

How I hated the bonfire, and illuminations, and everything to do with the city that had been so cruel to us! Tuthill's Farm seemed a haven of rest indeed, and its modest lamp glinting over the dark water to beckon us home, shone more welcome than ever harbour lights to sailors after a stormy voyage.

II.

Nevertheless, after that eventful visit to the city, our quiet life at the Farm never thoroughly contented me. I had tasted excitement, and craved for more. For the first time in my life I began to feel dull; even the pleasure of discussing events with my father was denied, for again he fell into the old silent habits, and could not be induced to break through his reserve.

Nothing was left for us girls but the record of our own adventures, and upon that slight record we managed to rear a very respectable fabric, wherein a niche was found for each of our recent acquaintance, whose previous history we composed

to our entire satisfaction, with equal confidence forestalling their destined future. Among all the figures of the pantomime (for truth was so grotesquely distorted as to earn the title) none afforded wider scope for fancy than that of the English officer who had rescued us from the violence of the mob. The contrast of his fierce courage when quelling the rioters with his gentle courtesy towards me, the kindness he displayed in protecting us from actual harm, and the rudeness and severity of his language to my father, gave plenty of material for the creation of an image varying with our mood of the moment. With the outline of a fine face and figure (for on these points no variation was possible) we pictured him in every variety of light and shade, attributing sometimes all the graces of an angel, and as often investing him with fiendish wickedness; but the idea never occurred to us of conceiving a mean between the extremes of virtue and vice, nor could we imagine a character brave yet cruel, savage yet tender.

I noticed that although to the young folks my father had little to say, his conversations with Mr. Tuthill grew more earnest and frequent than usual. This set me wondering, for my father took as little interest in the business of the farm as Mr. Tuthill in matters outside it; and I observed further after one of these long talks neither of them would have a good word for anybody that evening, but they would sit buried in thought often for hours together.

One day also I chanced to be in the wood-shed, and overheard part of the conversation as they passed close to where I was.

"I tell you it is impossible for me to refuse the offer," said my father.

"But what would you do with your daughter?" was the reply. "She could not accompany you."

"Why not? She has made a longer and more perilous journey with me already. . . ."

I could hear no more, though I strained my ears to the utmost. All day I pondered over the few sentences which revealed such a mighty change impending. This then was the upshot of my father's secret conferences with Mr. Tuthill—that we were to leave the Farm, to break up the home which custom had made seem ours by right. But why? What could the offer be that was tempting my father, and whither did he purpose to direct our steps? I felt as though excitement would kill me unless the riddle was expounded.

My distraction soon became noticed, but I could not summon courage to explain the reason and make a confession of eaves-dropping.

At length, however, I could bear the suspense no further, and, being asked one evening what ailed me, I burst into tears and besought my father to let me know the truth for good or for ill. Very solemn and grave was his face then ; not a word of rebuke or anger escaped his lips ; but tenderly drawing me towards him, he unfolded my mystery.

Our livelihood had, as I knew, been gained by his instructing the officers of the garrison in the art of Fence, whereby he had been enabled to recompense Mr. Tuthill for lodging.

But now several of his pupils were under orders for an expedition of uncertain duration to a frontier post, and it was doubtful whether he could acquire the same footing in the detachment that would succeed to the charge of the city. Invited to accompany the marching column, he hesitated only from consideration of my welfare ; the thought of leaving me behind seemed never to have occurred to him ; either I must go, or he must stay ; and in the end he had decided to take me. I should be the only woman of the party, but for that there was no help ; and he knew, he said, that my mother's child would not be wanting in courage.

Spring ripened into summer before the preparations for the expedition were complete. Once schooled to the idea of deserting the Farm, I was seized with my old ardour, which had been quenched by the disaster at the procession, to see the world and lead a more active life. Indeed so thoroughly did I become reconciled to the prospect, that I found myself more often tormented by misgivings lest something might chance to spoil our plans, than saddened at the necessity for breaking up our home and casting ourselves adrift upon an unknown sea.

Yet the wrench, when it came, was hard to bear ; there is always a chilling sense of isolation and insignificance at the moment when links with the past are being severed, before one has taken root elsewhere ; and I felt very miserable as we were rowed across Hudson. Not till we had reached the camp in the fields outside the city could I rid myself of the melancholy which had seized me ; but the contagious good-humour and the novel stir of preparations proved irresistible, and soon reconciled me to the strange company. The force was composed of some fifty men and officers, who received us with right royal welcome.

Our arrival had evidently been expected. I felt that I was the object of much curiosity, and was hardly allowed an interval between my blushes at being constantly saluted by the soldiers we came across, and finding myself introduced to so many officers by my father, who of course knew them all. That night the troops were to bivouac on the spot, and start the next morning. I found that a tent was provided for me; but the troops all slept on the open ground, for our journey lay through country where it was impossible to take heavy baggage, and in summer weather it was no hardship to be canopied by the stars. My father lay at the door of my tent wrapped in his plaid, a relic of his beloved Scotland. He had refused the offer of a tent for himself, saying that he would fare as the soldiers fared.

I must confess I did not sleep much that night, and rejoiced at the sound of the bugle call at dawn, which I instinctively recognized as the signal for rousing the camp.

My father had arranged for us to take our meals with the officers, of whom there were six; three only in actual command of the soldiers, and three who had obtained leave to accompany the expedition for love of sport and weariness of city routine.

Breakfast over, the camp was struck, and we all embarked in the *batteaux*, in which the greater part of the journey was to be made. It was calculated that we should reach the fort in about six weeks; up Hudson lay our road for many miles: then westward up one of the tributary streams till we could advance no further, even by repeated portage, and, to wind up, a march through the almost pathless forest to Fort Seneca on the head waters of the Ohio.

Memorable as the journey was to me, no adventures distinguished it. Day after day the men toiled on at the oars, a monotonous task, only varied, when we left Hudson, by the carrying places which entailed a severer labour. Progress became slower than ever, for the rapids to be passed were long and frequent, and a few miles often took days to accomplish, though the loads were constantly lightened as we consumed the stores from home.

I never regretted these delays, for the portages were always at some especially lovely spot, and it was delightful to be free to roam in the forest after the forced inactivity of the voyage. At the portages, too, I felt myself useful, for no one was above lending a hand in the work of transporting the baggage, and my

father and the officers all worked their hardest wherever help seemed most wanted.

At length we reached the point where we must leave the river and take to the forest. A splendid fall blocked the river, above which it descended a mere torrent from the slopes of the mountains. Here we found a camp of friendly Indians waiting for us ; some of them were to take back the *batteaux* to the city, and the rest to guide us through the forest to Fort Seneca. I was thoroughly frightened at the first sight of these savages, their dark skins, their weapons and their strange attire all so new to me. Soon my alarm changed into curiosity, and a strong desire to know something of their habits, and penetrate the reserve which took refuge in a dignified and courteous formality from all efforts to undermine it.

We halted for two or three days, while the baggage was being transferred from the *batteaux*, and saw them depart down the stream again in charge of a large body of Indians. I wondered whether they would reach the city in safety ; but the Indians, treacherous and thievish though they are, have never been known to break their word, even to an enemy, when once pledged by the acceptance or exchange of a belt of wampum skins ; for they honour the ceremony as a sacred covenant binding them faithfully to execute a promise thus consecrated.

At the first meeting the Commander of our troops duly offered and accepted the belt ; he was a swaggering fellow, who openly confessed his contempt for the Indians, and scorned their customs ; but the orders of the government were wisely stringent, enforcing respect and compliance with the Red man's methods in all transactions with them ; so the ceremony was accurately, and with the aid of a not too literal interpretation, politely gone through, and I believe that every man among the Indians would have died rather than that a hair of our heads should be injured under their escort, or a single *batteau* fail of safe return.

When the march began, every day brought proof of the ease with which our expedition could have been overwhelmed, had the savages been foes instead of friends. The horrible tales of Indian warfare which had frightened us as children, seemed ever about to be realized. Now in single file through the dense under-wood, now among the thick trunks which rendered any order of march impracticable ; at one time hemmed in between the forest and some lake or stream ; at another in a glen or defile with cliffs towering up on either side, how could the soldiers, hampered by

their clumsy uniforms and baggage, and only trained to fight in regular formation, ever have rallied or withstood a sudden attack from an unseen foe, swooping upon them from chosen ambush, at some spot where the perplexities of the road made resistance unavailing? Indeed such a journey as ours would have been hardly possible in war-time, or only at the greatest risk and danger. At present, however, few of the tribes were hostile, and we were safe enough for the time; the fear, which every one felt but none expressed, was lest anything should happen to exasperate the Indians, who are fickle as the wind, and thus endanger the safety of the fort; the main object of the expedition was to keep them in good humour by presents and purchases of their peltries, and so pave the way for a treaty in which it was hoped that the Indians would barter away their lands to the King for the benefit of settlers.

Such a mission required very delicate tact and management, the more so because the force indispensable to secure safety naturally tended to raise suspicion as to its objects. The pioneer of the expedition who had established the post now to be enlarged and fortified, was a man of long experience in dealing with the Indians, and had so far won their confidence as to obtain consent to our coming, ostensibly on the grounds of aiding the tribes against their neighbours, who were in league with the French, and preventing raids. The King would not leave his allies to fight alone, they were told. Fort Seneca should be a rallying-point for all the nations against the further advance of a hated foe who had already promised their lands as the prize of victory. Their cupidity was also worked upon by the prospect of a convenient trading centre, where a ready market for their skins would enable them to satisfy the craving for fire-water.

So it happened that the Indians were favourably disposed towards us at the outset, in spite of a natural antipathy towards settlers; but all the good that had been done might easily be annulled by thoughtless or high-handed conduct on our part when we took over the command of the post from the Agent I have mentioned. And the experience of the expedition thus far had already raised serious misgivings as to the capacity of its commander for any operations not contained in the book of tactics. He was a brave officer enough, but a thorough martinet, who would rather have had his men massacred in column than won a battle by irregular strategy.

At length, when the soldiers were as weary of the march as they had before been of rowing, we reached Fort Seneca. Suddenly emerging from a thick belt of forest, we saw it close in front of us ; just a cluster of rough log-cabins, with the English flag waving over them, and a broad bend of the deep, calm river beyond reflecting the wooded slopes which fringed the opposite shore.

Joy at gaining the haven where we would be, made me feel for the moment as if this were home indeed, and all difficulties and dangers receded into far distance. Around the bivouac fires that night there was an indescribable air of contentment and relief at the march being ended, which told how severe had been the work, though borne uncomplainingly by the soldiers. I too was thankful to be spared the fatigues of daily journeyings, and looked forward to our new life with expectant eagerness.

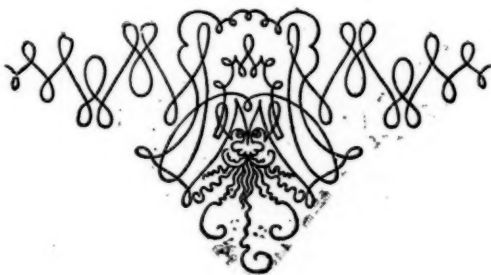
Idleness reigned in the camp for the next day or two, but activity was soon resumed in a fresh direction. The soldiers of our expedition had already been taught that in the backwoods a man must be master of more trades than one, and after serving as sailors and then as baggage-carriers, they had next to learn carpentering and building, in the construction of a regular fort, of sufficient size to accommodate the whole force, and strength to stand a siege by the Indians in case of need. It soon appeared that none of the officers possessed such knowledge of Indian warfare as was required for planning the fort to the best advantage for purposes of defence, and here we found the experience of the Agent who remained with us to superintend the trading invaluable ; but it was rather a sore point with the Commandant that he could not dispense with assistance in a matter of soldiering like this, although the Agent contrived to keep himself as much in the background as possible.

The work was long and arduous ; the chief part of the defences lay in a double line of palisades with a considerable distance between, and flanked by bastions at the angles. In the centre of the ground within, log houses were built upon a quadrangle, their outer walls pierced for musketry. The nature of the place lent itself to this plan, the banks of the river rising into an eminence from which the open space behind could be commanded as far as the forest by those within the stockade ; the interval was small, however, and it was intended to be enlarged by cutting away bushes and trees, an operation that might be postponed until after the main work was completed. On the riverside it was

necessary to secure free access to the water, since there was no other means of supplying the fort; part of the outer fence was therefore carried into the stream at a distance of two or three yards from the edge, and the bed of the river deepened close to the bank, so as to afford a convenient supply from the running water. On land, a deep ditch was dug outside the palisades, while a single narrow gateway gave admission to the fort itself.

Everything was done with timber; of this, fortunately, there was no lack, nor of labour to fell it; but many weeks passed before the last stake had been driven home, and we were at last able to feel ourselves safe against any emergency. It was, I think, the growing belief in impending danger that nerved the soldiers to work with unremitting energy at the defences.

(To be concluded.)



MRS. BARBAULD AND HER PUPIL.



ABOUT a century ago, before the days of High Schools, University Extension Lectures, and Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations, there lived at Hampstead a lady best known for her literary works, but equally successful as a teacher.

The Hampstead in which she lived was as different from the Hampstead we know now as are the past and present systems of education. Where streets and villas are now seen, there were then rural fields and lanes. But though quiet and retired, there was plenty of mental activity in the place; and no house in it could have been more full of intellectual interests than that of the Rev. Rochemont and his wife Anna Lætitia Barbauld. It is not as a writer that we are now going to think of her, but as teacher and friend. It is in these characters she shows herself in her letters to one of her pupils, Lydia R. But before quoting from them, perhaps it would be well to remind ourselves of a few events in the pathetic story of Mrs. Barbauld's married life.

Anna Lætitia Aikin was the daughter of Dr. Aikin, head of Warrington Academy, a famous Nonconformist College. In 1774 she left her father's house to become the wife of Mr. Barbauld, descendant of a French Protestant family. It was little wonder that her parents objected to the union, for Rochemont Barbauld had already had one attack of insanity; but affection, partly it seems inspired by pity, moved Anna to listen to his suit. Even before the last fatal attack of his malady, the fits of uncontrollable excitement and irritation to which he was subject, must have been a perpetual cause of anxiety to her. But their attachment to one another helped to lighten the burden, borne on her side in a brave and cheerful spirit, as her letters abundantly prove.

And she had much to help her, fortunately. Her large and sympathetic mind was full of interests. There was her husband's school for boys at Palgrave in Norfolk, their first home, which it

is said owed most of its success to her. There were her own near relations, especially the little nephew whom she adopted, the son of her brother Dr. Aikin; and her clever niece Lucy, to whom she was much attached; there were the neighbours who surrounded the different houses in which the Barbaulds successively lived, and in whose affairs she took a genial interest; there were literary friends and acquaintances in whose society her mind must have delighted—the Baillies, the Edgeworths, the Taylors, Miss Burney, Mrs. Siddons, Hannah More, Crabbe, Robertson, Mrs. Montagu, Dr. Priestley, and others; and there were her own literary occupations, enjoyable in themselves, and made the more delightful by success. If she was not able, on account of her husband's health, to act on her friend Mrs. Montagu's advice to keep a school for girls, in which she would probably have been as happy as she would have been successful, at least she could have one or two young-lady pupils, on whom she could exercise her talent for education.

Her correspondence with the one whom we have mentioned began after the Barbaulds had given up their school at Palgrave and moved to Hampstead, where she seems to have passed the busiest period of her life. Here she lived until one of her husband's illnesses made it desirable that they should take a house at Stoke Newington, to be near her brother Dr. Aikin; and here she stayed on after the painful death of Mr. Barbauld.

As it is uninteresting only to know one side in a correspondence, we will say a few words about the character and circumstances of the lady to whom the letters are written.

Like Mr. Barbauld, Lydia R. belonged to a Nonconformist family. Her father died in 1786, when she was still in the nursery, leaving her—an only child—to the care of a devoted mother. She seems to have deserved all the love showered upon her, for a more docile, affectionate and conscientious creature never lived. Indeed she was rather too painfully conscientious for her own happiness, as every indication in her letters and diary proves. When she grew up, being a gentle and attractive girl and something of an heiress, it was natural that she should have many admirers. The successful one was William Withering, son of the famous botanist, Justice of the Peace, and Captain in a Warwickshire regiment of Militia. He seems to have been a worthy, narrow-minded, opiated and formal man, who continued to over-train his already well-trained and submissive wife.

From her own account given in her diaries, their life together

was a happy one. It is full of such expressions as this—a part only of one of her elaborate sentences! “. . . blest with my best-beloved in mutual health, peace, competence, and in the calm enjoyment of domestic happiness, with my days devoted to rational, and I hope improving pursuits to the head and heart,” &c. &c.

The diary evidently passed under the eye of her “best beloved.” Let us hope that it was not of the nature of a schoolboy’s letter home, written under the supervision of the schoolmaster; but a real, though pedantic expression of her feelings.

If it were indeed true, that her nature was too sensitive and her mind too delicate to bear the strain of life, that strain was soon to be removed. After eight years of marriage, Lydia’s life as a responsible being came to an end for ever in this world. The same cloud of mental disease that had darkened the happiness of the Barbaulds’ home, descended on Lydia’s mind, never to be lifted until her death, about fifty years afterwards.

An old diary of her husband’s still in existence, shows how carefully he watched and tended her, and the affectionate interest he took in her sad condition. After his death she lived on in her pretty country place in Somersetshire, under the care of kind and devoted attendants. It was little wonder that they were fond of her, for even in her malady she showed her lovable disposition; and the writer of these pages remembers her a pretty old lady, full of smiles and curtsies, welcoming the friends who came to the house; and pleased, like a child, when children brought her their toys to show her.

But we must go back many years, to the time when Lydia, a prim and proper little maiden, between ten and eleven years old, was to be introduced to Mrs. Barbauld.

The first letter in the correspondence is to Lydia’s mother, and Mrs. Barbauld proposes,—“as intimacy is never so speedily formed as when people are in the same house together, and a child is generally shy and distant at first, and requires to be familiarized by degrees like a little bird,”—that Lydia should be sent to stay in the house with her for a few weeks, where a young Miss Finch “would be a pretty companion for her.” At the end of her letter, she gives a list of books from a catalogue sent by Mr. R., “of which there is a chance of her reading part.” Those who think that we, in our own day, have the advantage over our ancestors in the matter of education, will see that a hundred years ago young ladies were expected to read a good many solid books.

Unfortunately part of the page on which the list is written has been torn away, so that only a portion of it can be given. But it is long enough. Here it is :

"History of England.—Macaulay's Do. (Charlotte Macaulay's History of the Stuart Dynasty.)—Telemachus.—Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.—European settlements in America.—Universal History.—View of Do.—History of Charles V.—History of Charles XII.—History of Scotland.—Watson's Philip II.—Works of Lord Lyttelton.—Middleton's Life of Cicero.—Economy of Human Life.—Spectator—Rambler—Adventurer.—Tooke's Pantheon.—Roman History and English History in question and answer.—History of England in Letters from a Nobleman to his Son; besides many volumes of poetry by Milton, Akenside, Dryden, Gay, Gray, and Thomson."

How many of these works little Lydia read and digested we are not told; but Mrs. Barbauld's praises bestowed on her in one of the letters, for her observations on the history she had read, show that she was an attentive and thoughtful reader.

Mrs. Barbauld is fond of setting her pupil's mind to work on questions which must have taken a great deal of thinking to answer. After describing the beauties of Dorking, and giving the first prize in landscape-gardening to a certain Mr. Locke, whose place* she specially admires, she remarks, that "modern English Gardening is the art of Landscape painting, only the artist uses real trees and turf and water, instead of canvass and a box of colours." He must observe the same rules of composition, and "Mr. Locke had a consultation of painters to determine in what spot of the grounds his house would be built to most advantage. I wish," she adds, "you would give me your opinion in your next letter, *what constitutes that beauty in a landscape, with which we are so much charmed*; how much of it is owing to colour, to form, to contrast, to motion, etc?"

It would seem by the next letter that Lydia attempted some landscape-gardening in words herself, and a funny formal little composition it must have been.

"I think you are a very good landscape painter," her teacher writes, "and I hope you will some time draw them with a pencil as well as a pen, only your *cascades* must not '*gently distil*,' but rush foaming down the steep. The greater passion they put themselves into, the better. I think too, you might be satisfied with one navigable river, instead of some. I am sure we should

* Norbury Park.

think ourselves very magnificent with *one* here. There is one thing I beg you will take care of in your landscapes, and that is to keep them in constant verdure. Ours are so burnt up at this moment, that the *russet grass*, the *brown meadow*, the *tawny slope*, are epithets much more characteristic of the objects which meet our eyes at present, than if *green* were applied to every one of them. The summer has appeared this year in all the strength and glow of warmer climates, the true child of the sun, as Thomson calls him,

“In pride of youth and felt thro’ nature’s depth.”

At the end of the letter she offers her little correspondent another intellectual nut to crack. Lydia had been reading ‘Paul and Virginia,’ which Mrs. Barbauld thinks, if she has the sensibility which she believes her to possess, she “will not have finished without being almost heart-broken.” And she then asks her to tell her, “which kind of novels and Plays please you best, those which end fortunately or unfortunately, and which require the greatest skill in the Author to conduct?”

The next two letters are of a less instructive kind, for Mrs. Barbauld herself was taking a holiday and gives her pupil’s mind a similar rest. She describes her travels in the West of England, beginning with a dreadful passage from Wales to Minehead, a little trip generally made, she says, in three or four hours, having taken “four-and-twenty in very bad weather and in a vessel without accommodations.” From Minehead she went to Dulverton and Tiverton, and then to Exeter, where she visited her great friends, the Kenricks. She returns by Taunton, Glastonbury and Wells, with the views of which she is much gratified, and stays at Bath, which she prettily describes, as looking after dark “like a nest of glow-worms.” In her visit to Wales the following year, she stops by the way at Clifton, where she spends “a fortnight very agreeably in the company of the Edgeworth family.”

Her destination was Pitcot in Glamorganshire, where

“there are no houses to be had but cottages, not like Lady Camelford’s but real thatched cottages. Ours is a mile from our friends’ and I ride there every day upon old Dobbin, *behind* a young lady. I suppose you think I call her a young lady by courtesy only, but I assure you it is no such matter, for she is a very elegant woman, highly accomplished, and a great addition to our party. We look with pleasure to the little market town of Bridgend, which is four miles off and I was obliged to send there for a pen, before I could write to you.

In short nothing can be more compleat retirement than this place. I hear the Welsh gutturals crackling all around me and I hope to-morrow to hear a sermon in Welsh, and perhaps to assist at a meeting of jumpers, who abound in this neighbourhood. I am pleased with the look of the Welsh; they have black hair and black lively eyes, with an expression of vigour and chearfulness; many of the women are without shoes and stockings. Mr. Estlin says they are a very innocent race; the sin that most easily besets them it seems, is sheep-stealing to which indeed they have great temptations, for the sheep wander abroad upon the common without any body to watch them. . . I am glad to hear you have been so diligent and spent your time so usefully.

"I am Your obliged and aff.

A. L. BARBAULD."

Her letter from Norwich, written in August, 1800, is particularly interesting from the famous names mentioned in it. Norwich was a little intellectual centre, and Mrs. Barbauld would thoroughly enjoy the society there. She writes:—

"I cannot tell how you may spend your time at Birmingham; for our parts I must acknowledge that we are passing ours in complete dissipation,—calls and strolling about in the morning, visiting in the afternoon and evening. Tuesday we had a very pleasant sail up the river to a tea-drinking house. It was Mr. John Taylor's birthday, and he and Mrs. Opie sang all the way in the boat. I wished you with us on that account. Lucy [her niece Lucy Aikin] does not sing indeed, but the next day she revived the pleasure we had enjoyed by producing a copy of verses on the occasion. We have also spent a pleasant day at Mr. Kett's, where we met some of the Gurneys. Betsy Gurney is to be married on Tuesday, and half Norwich will be at the wedding. An interesting scene of leave-taking took place one day this week at her father's. Betsy, who has devoted herself very much of late to acts of charity and piety, had a school of boys and girls to the number of 80. These were all invited to drink tea and dance upon the green, and then each took leave of their benefactor, not without many tears on both sides. . . . Accept the sincere affection and esteem of Yours etc.,

"A. L. BARBAULD."

It is satisfactory to find that Lydia, too, had her holiday sometimes, and was not always improving her mind and making life "All work and no play"; for in a letter to her at Brighton Mrs. Barbauld remarks, after describing her own tranquil visit at Bedford, "a quiet and rather stupid town,"

"Thus you see our respective amusements have suited our respective periods of life. Yours gay and full of bustle, Princes, Plays, Prospects

and Promenades—ours retired and sober. And pray when do you intend to visit Church Row again? We want your family very much, and I cast many a longing look at the windows as I go by.”

Then, after a little chit-chat about friends and neighbours, the death of one of whom had prompted the poetic Lucy to produce “a copy of verses on the occasion,” she gives Lydia her opinion on some famous literary works :

“And so you are reading ‘Sir Charles Grandison’! I think I was about your age when I read it first. The method of carrying on the story by letters, has certainly the fault you point out. Richardson, I believe, introduced it; and it has the advantage when well-managed of giving an air of life and truth to the narrative, and making the characters, as it were, shew themselves. Sir Charles is so perfect and withal so cool, that I think he would be well-matched with *Belinda*, if she had not been born fifty years too late for him. You ask me how I like *Thaliba* (*sic*) I think there is a great deal of fancy in it and beautiful description, a very defective plan, tho’ often beautiful sentiment, much Poetry and no verse. I wish I could make use of some of his magic to transport myself to the Stein at Brighton amongst you all for one day, but *hoy*s I do not like, and Post-Chaises I can’t afford, except my health required it, and I thank heaven it does not, so we have shut up our travelling schemes for this year, and look forward to the quiet winter evenings, and their uninterrupted literary occupations. Mr. Barbauld desires to be most affectionately remembered to yourself and along with me to Mrs. R. and Miss Harrop,

“Your ever affec^{ate}

A. L. BARBAULD.”

Here is a pleasant specimen of Mrs. Barbauld’s playful style, one surprising expression in which we cannot help enjoying, as coming from so well-regulated a person as the writer.

“MY DEAR LYDIA,

“Would you rather receive a scrap of a letter, than none? Yes, you say; then the scrap you shall have, first to thank you for yours and to tell you that we are all well, but *I* am very busy; being, as I believe you know, deeply engaged in the job I have perhaps rashly undertaken. Indeed I have at present a splendid opportunity, which I think I might as well use, of getting clear with my correspondents, at little expence of my own invention. For cannot I send them some brilliant paragraphs from Richardson, from Sheridan, from Mrs. Carter, from Dr. Young all whose letters lie before me at my mercy? And for elegant compliments, in which I never dealt much, I might sprinkle every page with them. The elegance, the delicacy of my Miss Lydia’s mind, her amiable and

grateful attentions to her respectable parent—the diversified employments which fill up her well-spent day—the social ease and comfort enjoyed at her fireside,—No, hang it, this will never do! I thought I was going on very currently in the complimentary strain, and I perceive* my stupid brain has only stumbled upon downright truths. Well! I ought to conclude with making an apology for my *scribble* not *scrawl*, that word seems to have succeeded it—unfortunately this will be founded in truth also. Before I do conclude however, let me tell you that I found your letter, I knew I had not burnt it and so I enclose it.

“Adieu, Adieu, Love, Com^{re} etc. Yours truly A. L. BARBAULD.”

Perhaps it is the variety in Mrs. Barbauld's style that gives it its greatest charm—the mixture of the novel and unexpected expressions of an original mind, combined with an old-fashioned formality, as in this opening to her next letter.

“Greatly rejoiced was I on receiving a letter, and so kind and affectionate a letter, from my dear Lydia, on whom she rightly judges my thoughts often dwell, and give me leave to add, with all that complacency, affection and esteem which naturally results from so intimate a knowledge of her character, and so long an experience of her partial attachment.”

Our next extract contains a remark which is certainly not applicable in the present day; when, as the reward of their artistic or intellectual attainments, ladies certainly *do* become objects of public attention.

“I was gratified last Tuesday with seeing the distribution of the medals, at the Society for the encouragement of arts, the Duke of Norfolk was President, he filled the office with much grace and contrived to say something to everybody; there were more women than men who received prizes for the arts, and as there are few occasions on which a young lady has to exhibit herself as an object of public attention, I could not help feeling greatly interested for the females who with palpitating hearts, were to receive the reward of their talents. The institute was closed the week before by a lecture from Mr. Davy, who leaves off a high favourite with the public and especially the ladies.”

Neither, we are happily certain, would she have thought the observation at the end of the next passage, written not long after, a true and accurate statement, if she had lived nearly a hundred years later. She is criticising some books of her day,

* In these letters Mrs. Barbauld's spelling is retained, as well as her use of capital letters.

and after giving her opinion, that Darwin's Poem, which he left unfinished, would be entertaining and whimsical and rich in harmony and wild in system like all his other works, she says—

“Miss Hayes's female Biography will interest our sex, but one should read a work of that kind with more pleasure, if unfortunately those women who have been most *famous*, had not been often at the same time most *infamous*. Pericles, you know, told the ladies of Greece somewhat harshly:—‘As for you the best line of conduct you can pursue, is not to make yourselves talked of one way or other.’ The present times are more liberal to women, but still, even in England, if you were to reckon up the women whose names are generally known, you would find the greater part were so, for vice rather than virtue.”

Then follow other topics.

“So you have got Mrs. R——e again at Hampstead, and by great good luck, I hear she has lost her husband. I do not know whether I ought not to have written her a congratulatory letter upon it. I hope you have got her Selection in your society, there are really many pretty things in it. I see no new books now, for there is no book-society at Newington, so I live in utter ignorance of all literary matters. I could tell you perhaps, how many pearls were showered upon the head of the bride of Almamon, and how much marrow and sugar, with how many baskets of eggs and figs, Sultan Solymán eat for breakfast, for I have just been reading it in Gibbon; but for the productions of the present day, I know no more of them than a Hottentot, Mrs. Hunter's novel excepted, which she sent me. It is not much either above or below the standard of the last; the same want of plan and the same superabundance of trifling little circumstances. It is a great disadvantage to a woman, that with the same eyes as a man, she does not see so much as a man does. The confined range of domestic occupations; the minutiae of dress and furniture; the pride, pomp and circumstance of visiting, do not furnish such interesting matter as the various occupations of men and the development of characters, in the trying and varied scenes which occur in the world at large. This, as I have often thought, greatly enhances the merit of M^{me}. D'Arblay's novels.”

We wonder whether the serious Lydia allowed herself to smile a little over Mrs. Barbauld's rather mischievous reference to Mrs. R——e's loss. Perhaps the scenes of gaiety in which she was taking part at this time, inclined her to relax her natural gravity, for we soon find her friend writing to her,

"I am happy to hear so good an account of you ; that is to say that you are plunged into all manner of dissipation. . . . I hope you are as strong as Hercules, as indeed every young lady ought to be in order to encounter the various labours and dangers they have to undergo."

It has been said that every good woman is at heart a match-maker, and it is easy to see the grain of truth in this saying, since sympathy in other people's interests may lead to matrimonial plans for their happiness. From Mrs. Barbauld's pleasure in writing of the engagements and marriages of her friends, it is possible that she made a good many of such plans for their benefit, though she was probably too wise or too cautious to carry them into action. We light upon some amusing passages in her letters on the subject. After mentioning various attacks made on her friends by the influenza, the fashionable complaint of her day as of ours, she says—

"I find I am filling my letter with nothing but ailments—I cannot help it, I had much rather tell you that people were all well and the young folks going to be married by dozens at a time and that we were very gay with balls and concerts and all manner of revelry ! But if people are not gay and are not going to be married, and will be sick I am not answerable for it."

"I always tell young ladies of weddings when I hear of them, just to put them in mind that there are such things,"

she slyly remarks in another letter.—She enjoys having a little joke at her nephew Charles' expense.

"What shall I say ? you are not much of a politician and do not expect a place, otherwise I would give you joy of the new ministry.—I could tell you of Valentines and verses flying about our house, but as you are not in love *to my knowledge*, you would not care for them.—I could tell you of the lamentable situation of poor Charles, bereft of his love who is flown away to Yorkshire, (he does not eat I believe above two or three times a day) but then I know you consider him as an old batchelor and have no sympathy for him.—I will therefore content myself with telling you an old truth, that I am affect^d yours

"A. L. BARBAULD.

"Stoke Newington, Feb. 18th."

Marriages amongst her neighbours or particular friends the Hoares, Powells, Estlins, Kinders, Enfields, Taylors, Reeves, Kenricks, naturally interest her most of all, and she writes of them with so much warm sympathy as to awaken ours in people

we have never seen. Perhaps she may have been more inclined to the topic, from a shrewd suspicion that Lydia herself was likely before long to take a keen personal interest in it.

If so, her surmise was a correct one, as we shall soon see.

* * * * *

In 1806 the most important event in Lydia's life occurred. She and her mother left Hampstead to go and live at Birmingham, where she met and soon became engaged to William Withering.

Mrs. Barbauld's letters of congratulation to mother and daughter sound amusingly stilted to our modern ears, but they breathe a spirit of genuine affection. We should not write in the same style now, but we should not feel more warmly.

"Stoke Newington, Nov. 11th, 1807.

"MY DEAR MRS. R.

"You judge rightly in concluding that Mr. Barbauld and myself must feel the most lively interest in the communication we have just received from your friendship. We thank you very sincerely for your kindness in making it, and beg to congratulate you on having so much to your satisfaction concluded an affair which I am sure must have been the most anxiously trying to your feelings of any you have engaged in, since the disposal of your own hand. I never had the pleasure of personally knowing Dr. Withering but your intimacy with the family I was aware of, and it must be a most pleasing circumstance to you to dispose of the dear girl amongst your old and intimate connections. Still, my dear Madam, I enter entirely into your feelings which, let the connection be as agreeable as it may and the situation as near as it may, must suggest in some measure the idea of privation; to marry a daughter well is a joy no doubt to a fond mother, but it must be a weeping joy. To the object of your solicitation, to our dear Lydia, present our sincere congratulations and most ardent wishes for every blessing and every satisfaction that can attend the state into which she is preparing to enter; may the happy man who has won the possession of so valuable a heart, estimate it properly and use it kindly. As to waiting a twelve-month, that may or may not be; my friend Mrs. John Taylor, with all her firmness and her resolves, found herself obliged to give up in the article of time, to the importunity of the lover. . . ."

"Stoke Newington, Nov. 30, 1807.

"MY DEAR LYDIA.

(For after some months I must not, you know, call you Lydia, and I love the name so well I am resolved to use it while I can.) I cannot satisfy my feelings without personally addressing you on a subject which must be near my heart, because it relates to the disposal of yours.

How pleasing it must be to you to form the important connection you are going to form with the full approbation of your family and your dear parent, as well as your own decided inclination ! Without both these I know you could not be happy and yet how seldom is it that both so cordially concur ! Till this decisive engagement is taken, be the parent as indulgent and the daughter as dutiful as they may, they cannot be sure they shall not be called upon to sacrifice the peace of one or the other party. Tho' I have not the pleasure of knowing the gentleman who has been so happy as to obtain your regard, the celebrity of his father gives me naturally a respectable idea of the son, and makes me feel as if I half knew him. . . . Mr. Barbauld joins me, dear Lydia, in the most cordial wishes for your happiness in every scene of life, tried and untried ; with affectionate respects to Mrs. R.

" I am ever Yours

A. L. BARBAULD."

It is sad to have to turn from the happy letters from which we have been quoting, to those which tell of the most painful episode in Mrs. Barbauld's history. For while Lydia's prospects seemed to be brightening, her friend's were clouded by a sorrow, always one of the hardest to bear, and in her case hardest of all to her loving heart, from the distressing form it took. But sad as are the letters we have now to give, we would not have lost them from the correspondence, for they reveal all the nobility of Mrs. Barbauld's nature, her patience, her tenderness of affection, her courage, her acceptance of the heavy trial laid upon her—so that we admire her even more in adversity than in prosperity. We could not know or understand her so well without them.

A long letter from the nephew, Charles Aikin, first broke to Lydia the sad news of her friend's trouble. So violent, he says, had been the paroxysms with which Mr. Barbauld had been seized, that he had threatened both his own and his wife's life, and it had been necessary to put him under restraint for a time in his own house.

In the three touching letters which follow, Mrs. Barbauld tells the story of her sorrow ; but shows how her own troubles do not make her forget to sympathize in Lydia's happiness.

" You and Mrs. R. I know well have too truly sympathized with me in my heavy affliction, to wonder at my not having addressed you by letter for some time past. Yet to such friends I should have written, but that I knew Charles had written you an account of our then situation ; and I have now waited in hopes to give you a better account than you had at that time. And I *have* the satisfaction to tell you that my dear

Mr. Barbauld is materially better, may I say well? in every particular but one. . . . He has been to see Cooke in the 'Man of the World' and was as much delighted as at any time he could have been, and has seen several of his friends. He is not at all low, neither at present is there any violence in his manner. Yet in one circumstance, most distressing to me, he is not materially altered. His alienation from me still continues, and has the appearance of being strongly fixed. O my dear Lydia! could you have thought when you last saw us, that I should ever have to lament the decay of affection in him who loved me so well? I do not feel less affection for him, for I know malady is alone the cause; but I feel wounded in the tenderest part, a part for which I had provided no armour; and what grieves me the most, is that I can be of no service to him. In any other calamity I could have soothed, attended, nursed him; in this, absence from him can alone have a chance of being serviceable. In a temporary absence however, I have great hopes; he is to go to Norwich to spend two or three months in lodgings there, and he will be there surrounded with kind friends. God grant a complete restoration! I know you love us so well, that I make no apology my dear Lydia, for thus clouding your opening prospects, when all with you ought to be joy and hope, with the sympathetic tear for your poor friends. But this is so mixed a state that we can none of us say, Here will I build my tabernacle and no sorrow shall come nigh me; and well is your pious mind aware, that all *stable* happiness must be looked for in a better state. . . ."

"I assure you I do all I can to keep up my spirits. My friends here are very kind to me; and hope, and employment of some sort or other enable me to get tolerably through the day; but there is a lonely and desolate feel in the evening, which sometimes I find it difficult to bear—but enough of this. God bless you, my dear Lydia and your dear Mother,

"I am hers and your obliged and affectionate, A. L. BARBAULD.
March, 1808."

The next letter is to Mrs. R., thanking her for the "obliging attention of a piece of wedding-cake," telling her, "that the happy knot is at length tied." Her fervent wishes for the happiness of the young couple ring sadly in our ears, when we remember the sequel of Lydia's married life.

"As to my own prospects they are very dark at present. The absence of three months (a long time I thought it) has not had the effect which was hoped from it, in removing the unhappy alienation from me which has taken possession of his mind, and I fear I must at length be obliged to submit to the heart-breaking expedient of a

separation. The state of irritation he is in when with me, evidently does him hurt ; and if he is, which is certainly the case, much better at a distance from me, I must not any further attempt to keep him. You will, my dear friend, enter into my feelings sufficiently without my dwelling upon them.—On running over these sentences, I find I have said he and him, without mentioning Mr. Barbauld, but that is all one, it can require no explanation. . . . For myself it is now quite determined. My brother and Charles both say I must not return to my house while Mr. Barbauld is there. What plan I shall follow, where I shall be and where he will be, I know not yet. I shall endeavour to keep up my spirits as well as I can and must seek for something of employment and something of company, but I can form no scheme yet. I spent a day some time ago at Hampstead ; it was a pleasant day, for it was at the Carrs ; but I looked with a wistful eye at your former habitation, and wished, selfishly wished, that you were there still. . . . Miss Baillies are returned to their house, but poor Joanna does not look well at all. Farewel my dear Madam, Mr. Barbauld, if with me, would I know express his cordial regards and in that would still unite with Your ever affec^{to}

“A. L. BARBAULD.”

In a letter to the bride written about a month afterwards, the picture she gives of the desolation of her home is even more pathetic. She does not forget to begin by rejoicing in Lydia Withering's happiness, but her thoughts soon take a mournful turn again.

“Alas, my dear Friend,” she writes, “it is only in carrying my thoughts out of myself and my own situation that I can now enjoy any happiness. Mrs. R. has no doubt told you that an arrangement for a separation has been found necessary between me, and I can scarce believe it, the person I have loved and still do love more than any other in the world, and whose tender affection to me, you have so often been witness to. I have been this week here at Parndon ; when I return I shall in a few days be left alone, a solitary being in a large house, where everything will put me in mind of my lost companion. I hope in some way or other, to engage a companion that will prevent the utter solitude which I am sure I cannot bear ; but the companion of more than thirty years, will he ever return ? Alas ! at present I see little prospect of it.—This is not like a congratulatory wedding-letter, but I cannot help it. You will naturally ask, where does Mr. Barbauld go ? He will take for the present lodgings in London near Charles, and board with him, and I hope will spend his time pleasantly, for he is generally in good spirits and you never saw him more lively or enter-

taining. . . . It is well for you that Mr. Smith will frank this letter, for I am sure it is not worth postage—all that it means to say is, to express my hopes that *Mrs. Withering* will from time to time remember with accustomed affection, the old friend and correspondent of *Lydia R.* Please to make my compliments acceptable to Mr. Withering and believe me

“ever, faithfully and affectionately Yours A. L. BARBAULD.”

This letter, written in September 1808, is the last in the collection before the painful close of Mr. Barbauld's illness. Before the year was ended, the terrible news was brought to her that he had drowned himself in the New River. No wonder the shock to her mind was so great as to make writing impossible to her for some time. It must have been a help and comfort to her, when in the course of time she was again able to occupy her mind with her literary work—with her edition of the *British Novelists*, with its excellent essay on Fiction from the Earliest Times; with her poem on the King's illness, a subject that must have come sadly home to her own mind; and her political and social poem on the year 1811—a passage in which, we may mention by the way, is said to have suggested to Macaulay the oft-quoted New Zealander.

More than a year passed before Lydia received another letter from her; but when she hears that the young friend, of whom she was so fond, was herself in trouble from her mother's illness, she at once writes to express her sympathy. And a still more tender and affectionate letter follows, when she hears soon after of the death of Mrs. R.

It is pleasant to find the tone of the remaining letters becoming more cheerful as time went on. Mrs. Barbauld's mind was too healthy to allow painful thoughts to take up their abode in it, and poison all the blessings that remained to her. Her books, her writing, her friends and relations, especially perhaps those of a generation younger than herself—for Mrs. Barbauld always understood and loved young people—supplied her with many interests. And soon we read of her pleasure in having various young ladies to stay with her; a Miss Martineau, a charming Miss Fletcher from Edinburgh, and Miss Sarah Taylor. The letters are so happy and pleasant and interesting, that we would gladly give all, if space allowed; but we must content ourselves with a few quotations.

“I am much pleased,” she writes, “with a young friend whom I have in the house with me at present—a daughter of Mr. Peter

Martineau's. She is gentle, amiable, diligent, remarked by all who see her for sweetness of disposition and property of manners, and often put me in mind—Guess of whom?

"Have you got my Neice's * Poem yet at Birmingham? You will see it no doubt, and I have as little doubt will be pleased with it. She has recieved * many compliments upon it already. The subject, 'On the character of Women' is delicate and requires management, but she has taken great care not to make assumptions or say anything which a man jealous for the superiority of his sex (which you know Mr. Withering all you men are,) can reasonably object to."

From what we gather about Mr. Withering and the homage exacted by him from his meek little wife, he certainly must have pleaded guilty to her charge! In her next letter she writes—

"Your letter would now have been answered sooner, but that I have had a young lady [Sarah Taylor] in the house, and have also spent some days at Hampstead. I was at Miss Baillie's, as well as Miss Fletcher, a young lady from Edinburgh, who as perhaps you know has been resident with me this winter and who by the way is an extremely pretty girl and very sweet and amiable in every respect. They made me go to a party at Mrs. Milligan's, Roslin House. . . where there was a dance for the young folks, not children but just above; the blossoming age, lovely fifteen and sixteen, with roses not yet breathed upon by the contaminating air of London drawing-rooms and public places. Mrs. Carr brought her three eldest and a very pretty niece to the dance; and if she felt proud, I can excuse her. There was one indeed of a maturer age, Mrs. P——, who being freed from the trammels of Quakerism, danced all the evening apparently with much pleasure to herself and to her father, still a Quaker, who sat by. . . I took a melancholy walk along Church Row, where now there is not a single person I know, or a single door at which I could knock. I drank tea at Mrs. Slater's where we talked of you, and where I met two very good friends of yours, Mr. and Mrs. Ware.—Well, I think I have no other excursion to tell you of, except that Miss Fletcher and I (for without the inducement of taking her I am sure I should not have gone) saw a French Play acted at Dr. Marcett's by French emigrants. The Play was Racine's 'Berenice' and it was very well acted, an advantage that Play requires to render it interesting, for you may recollect that it has neither incident nor catastrophe; there is no change of fortune. . . In short the Play could never have sustained itself, but for the sweetness of the verse, some charming lines which everybody repeats, and the allusions,

* Even the highly-educated Mrs. Barbauld finds a little difficulty sometimes about the order of her vowels.

which at the time were well understood, to the loves of Louis XIV. and Mary Mancini."

"Stoke Newington, *Feb*", 1812.

"My niece is just returned from Edinburgh, where she has been spending the winter with that charming family, the Fletchers;—Miss Fletcher is come home and come out, as they call it, and from the variety of company she has seen there, has brought home a number of anecdotes which she relates with her usual humour and vivacity. I understand Mrs. Hamilton is about some new work, I believe relative to education. I wonder whether any family has been better educated, for all that has been written on that subject. If I were to look for a family where a good style of education prevailed, I should seek it where there was good sense, a knowledge of the world as it really is, and no very peculiar opinions—and such indeed is the spirit of Mrs. Hamilton's works, and they are good because there is not much of system in them.—I trust the next generation may see our poor better educated. Is it not a disgrace to our wealthy nation, that a much greater proportion of the population of Ireland can read, than of this country?—I was yesterday in the company of a gentleman who has been making a tour in Greece. We were amused by hearing that many of our books, and amongst others 'the Vicar of Wakefield,' are translated into modern Greek, and that Homer himself is translated into modern Greek and (what an exclamation Mr. Withering makes!) in *rhyme*. The vale of Tempe he was charmed with, but the fields of Enna (for he went to Sicily) have no flowers; I suppose Proserpine gathered them all.—You have by this time, I doubt not, read and admired Miss Baillie's new Vol. of Plays. Her fine mind, her poetical genius, her delicate touches of all the chaste sensibilities of the heart, are equally conspicuous in this as in all former works. I think 'The Beacon' stands the best chance of being acted, of any in this Vol., for the passion of fear is not so pleasing a one for delineation as many others.—Of Miss Seward's letters, I think exactly as you do. She had certainly a great deal of real talent; pity it was so disgraced by affectation. What hurts one most in the letters is the idea that on occasions the most affecting, as the illness of her Father, the death of her sister, she took copies of her letters with a view to print them. I am told however that they have been retouched and burnished, so as to be pretty different from those her correspondents really received, many personalities have also been suppressed. Mr. Edgeworth, I understand, when he heard of the intended publication, wrote a letter threatening vengeance if his name was introduced in any way. Accordingly it is not, tho' I have no doubt it was often to be found in the originals with many a bitter comment. I do not think Scott's last publication worthy of him, tho' evidently it could be written by none but a Poet. The great fault is that the beginning

has nothing to do with the end. If he wanted to celebrate the battles of Busaco and Albuera he should have written a Campaign as Addison did, and not have begun with Don Roderick and his vision. You ask me if I like Campbell's 'Gertrude.' It is an elaborate Poem, beautiful verse, and perhaps satisfies better on the second reading than the first, for the story is rather confused . . . I heard somebody say that you had it in contemplation to come to London this spring; I wish it may be true, because I think you will not forget Newington, on account of the pleasure that seeing you both will give to, your affectionate

"A. L. BARBAULD."

"Stoke Newington, May, 1813.

"I am impatient for the pleasure of seeing you, which I hope you will indulge me in as soon as you conveniently can, and a very great pleasure indeed it will be to renew the intercourse which once was so frequent with you, and to improve the acquaintance with Mr. Withering which was commenced by the glimpse you were so good as to give me of him soon after your marriage. London is particularly full at present. I do not often venture into its crowded streets, the bustle of which is now particularly disagreeable to me; but I was drawn there the other day by a strong inducement, the meeting Miss Edgeworth, who with her father and his fourth wife, a handsome and very agreeable woman, are now in London. Miss E.'s merit is now universally known and properly appreciated and her door is in a manner besieged with admirers. She brings with her a story of three Volumes which is to be printed this summer. I know no lady who at present stands so high in the public esteem, except perhaps Hannah More in a certain set. A very large set however; M^{rs}. de Stael, a star also of the first magnitude, will soon shed her brilliancy upon the London circles. I suppose she is the most eloquent woman now existing . . . The most fashionable amusement now in London seems to be Mrs. Siddons' readings. She has very wisely made her tickets a guinea, and those who did not care for going when they might see her in the boxes for six shillings and the play properly got up with all its accompaniments, are glad to crowd to the *Argyle Rooms* where she gets five or six hundred pounds a night for reading. A little coquetry with the public succeeds very well. It is true in this case you have the advantage of having no inferior actors to take the illusion off, and finer modulations of her fine voice than the size of our large theatres will allow . . . There is an Exhibition open at present of the late Sir Joshua Reynolds' paintings, which the proprietors with great liberality have sent for exhibition. I was much gratified to see so many fine pieces together; tho' as to many of them which I had seen as they came out in all their freshness and beauty, such was their faded appearance that it was like seeing a beauty whom one had known in her bloom, after she was grown sallow and withered.

That objection however does not apply to his *Ugolini*, where the ghastly appearance of the whole group is quite in unison with the state of the picture—West has another large painting exhibiting at his house, *Christ before Pilate* but neither is this, I understand, to go to America.—Have you seen a new Poem of Montgomery's? *The World before the Flood*. Room enough you will say for imagination. You will be pleased with many parts which are finely wrought, particularly the Death of Adam

"With sincere affection and esteem Yours A. L. BARBAULD."

"Stoke Newington, June 1814.

"Is it possible that you have been sitting quietly at the Larches, while all the world have been staring at Emperors and Kings; and all the young Ladies and others not young, at both which I feel very indignant, crowding to beg a kiss from that whiskered old fellow Blucher?—And then the fireworks, and the Roundabouts, and gingerbread stalls in the park, and the cockleshell fleet in the Serpentine river.—Will not these bring you up? And now the cry is, The poor princess! shut up, deprived of pen and ink, as ill-treated as Miss Clarissa Harlow! Will no knight in black armour and plumed helmet, appear to deliver her from durance vile?—Charming subjects these, for gossiping tea-tables. I think there is this difference between London and the Country, that in the country different parties talk of different subjects, according to their tastes and their connections; but in London you may be sure if you enter into twenty companies, that they are all talking of the same thing, the event of the day

"Your faithful and aff^{to} A. L. BARBAULD."

In former letters Mrs. Barbauld had expressed her weariness of the strife and bloodshed into which the ambition of Napoleon Buonaparte had plunged Europe. In the two next she writes, amongst other things, of the *fêtes* and rejoicings with which the much-desired peace was celebrated, and gives no quarter to the selfish Emperor, who had so long driven it away.

After some messages about Dr. Withering the botanist, to Lydia's husband, she asks—

"And now with what else . . . shall I fill my letter? Will it please you to hear that all the world will be in the park to morrow? Yes; for tho' you would not come up yourself for all these fine sights, you will enjoy the pleasure of others; but you will pity my sister and myself when I tell you we were obliged to refuse a delightful invitation to see it from a house in the park, because all the coaches had been engaged days and weeks beforehand.

"Shall I tell you, or have you heard that Dr. Holland is appointed

Physician to the Princess of Wales, with a handsome salary and they are speedily to set out on their travels? It is a very pretty situation for a young man of that profession, but his friends laugh and tell him he must take care of his *character*. The Princess means to winter at Naples. . . Well, the grand fête is gone off and as far as I understand without accident, except that the Chinese Pagoda on the bridge, which it seems was intended should be permanent, blew up without leave and endangered a man who was within. I understand from those who were there both yesterday and to-day that notwithstanding that all London was invited and that all London seemed to be there, there was no shouting, no rudeness, no disposition to riot; everybody seemed amused and happy yet no public feeling seemed to be raised; the joy for peace was much short of the sensation produced by the peace of Amiens. Indeed the feeling had had time to wear off. . . I will say no more but that I am dear Mrs. Withering,

"Your obliged and affectionate

A. L. BARBAULD."

In the letter which follows, dated January 1815, she enters with warm interest into the Witherings' scheme of travelling.

"The French," she says, "will have learned what sort of comforts Englishmen expect and the inns will have provided accordingly. I have been travelling too. I have been ascending Chimborazo with Humboldt, crossing a rapid river upon a bridge of ropes and making myself dizzy with looking down from precipices formed by two mountains which have been rent asunder. It does great credit to Helen Williams to have translated such a book. The greater part of it is too scientific for me; but these scenes of wild nature Humboldt makes me feel, for he describes them as a man who felt them himself.—I have just been reading *The Lord of the Isles*, and lamenting that the expensive manner of printing at present in fashion, and the high price given for Quarto poems, tempts so many of our poets to write themselves down. I think you can hardly name one who has not rather lessened than increased his fame by his last performance. The scene in the hut of the Banditti, and the death of Allan, and the quarrel at the nuptial feast, are however striking; but I can hardly think verses poured out with such rapidity will go down to posterity *along* with those of Pope or Milton."

After a little neighbourly gossip about "some matches," which had been broken off and "and where the parties are not likely to solder together again," she makes her attack on Napoleon.

"Thanks for your entertaining account of the Lion in his den. How

that man can bear to be *shown* and questioned and stared at after what he has been, I cannot conceive!—If he had a good conscience indeed, —Oh! then he might encounter the scrutinizing glance and the eager stare and lose none of his dignity; but for him, What, as Lord Byron says, must be *the madness of his memory!* I am glad you are among people who rejoice in peace. This place is full of nothing but Stock-jobbers and Insurance brokers, and I am indignant at seeing how little they regard the misery of a whole continent in comparison with their petty gains. But have we peace? there seems to be a great deal to settle yet at Vienna. . . .

“Believe me ever, Your faithful and affectionate, A. L. BARBAULD.”

* * * * *

With this letter ends the correspondence of twenty years—a correspondence, which from many allusions scattered here and there amongst the letters, had given the greatest pleasure to both the writers. The later letters especially abound in expressions of sympathy with Lydia, interest in all that concerns her, and delight in hearing from her. She is impatient for the pleasure of seeing her. It gives her “particular pleasure” to receive her letters, “for believe me, my dear Mrs. Withering,” she writes, “I value very highly the kind expressions of your affection, and would not on any account neglect a correspondence which is truly dear to me.”

After Lydia’s marriage, Mrs. Barbauld begins her letters, “My dear Mrs. Withering,” as she thinks she ought no longer to call her Lydia, “the name I love so well,”—but old associations are too strong for her, and we find her dropping into the Christian name before she has written many lines.

Though no record of her feelings on the subject of Lydia’s distressing illness remains, there needs none to tell us of the deep sorrow—all the deeper from the painful experience she had gone through in her own home—with which she must have heard of it from Mr. Withering, not long after the last-quoted letter had been written.

That even in poor Lydia Withering’s malady the remembrance of the happiness which Mrs. Barbauld’s friendship had once given her, did not for a long time fade from her mind, is shown in a touching extract from Mr. Withering’s diary, eleven years later. . . . He says—

“I showed her, ‘Mrs. Barbauld’s Legacy.’ She looked into it saying, ‘*I loved her!*’”

E. C. RICKARDS.

LADY BETTY'S BALL-GOWN.

BY DOROTHY F. BLOMFIELD.

I.

LADY BETTY was at once the pride, the despair and the envy of the county in which it had pleased Providence to place her. When I add that that county was Huntshire, unrivalled in the annals of sport and beauty, the full force of the above statement will be properly appreciated. Lady Betty Wray, the most beautiful *débutante* of her year, had lost her heart in her first season to that noted sportsman and too fascinating detrimental, the Honourable Ronald Wincaunton. Everybody knows now why she refused the two great catches of the day, the Duke of Northlands and Septimus Rhino, the American millionaire, not to speak of less pretentious aspirants ; but at the time her people, Lord and Lady Windermere, were in despair. The Earl could give Lady Betty at best but a poor couple of hundred pounds a year in dower, and if Lord Mendip could match it in an allowance to his son, it was about all he could do. Things looked black, indeed, for the unfortunate lovers, when suddenly Fortune smiled upon the Honourable Ronald in a way she seldom does upon younger sons. A rich and childless aunt died in the very nick of time, leaving all her money to her nephew, who lost not a day in securing the hand of his lady-love. Lady Betty had never regretted her choice ; her husband adored her and her three lovely children, and she adored them. Every one admitted that the Wincauntons were a model couple, whose devotion to each other had not, however, at all dulled the fine edge of their social capacities. They made a most delightful host and hostess, Lady Betty's grace and charm softening a dignity of manner and purity of mind that might otherwise have been alarmingly severe.

Young and lovely as she was, entering with spirit into all the gaieties natural to her age and station, no breath of scandal had ever clouded her fair fame. She was the standard by which the

county society measured itself. Did you venture to set up your tents in Huntshire, the first question your neighbours would ask was, "Has Lady Betty called on Mrs. A.?" and if she had called, the county would open its arms and take you to its bosom with fluttering warmth. Lady Betty's acquaintance with you was, so to speak, your seal of respectability. You are not, however, to suppose that the Wincauntons set themselves up as judges of their neighbours. They were too simple-minded for that,—but they had their idea of what is meant by the term "gentlepeople," and it must frankly be confessed that it was a little out of date. Risky jokes fell flat in Lady Betty's drawing-room, and doubtful flirtations did not flourish under her roof; nevertheless, she was a most popular woman. The men put this down to her beauty and sweetness of nature, the women to her exquisite manners and still more exquisite dress. There was no doubt that Lady Betty carried the art of dressing to absolute perfection, and in this she was ably seconded by her maid, Mademoiselle Josephine Roche.

Josephine might indeed be described as the crown to the many gifts which Fortune had showered upon her mistress; she made all her gowns, and neither for love nor money would she have betrayed the secret of those wonders of cut and finish. Lady Betty had one great weakness—she loved distinction in her toilette. No one had ever dared to copy her gowns—Josephine would have scornfully told you that it was impossible to do so!—and no one ever knew what they would be like till they were put on. It was one of the local excitements to see what Lady Betty Wincauntton would wear at this race meeting, or that ball. Two such events were at the moment the all-important topics of conversation in the county,—the Splashmore Race-meeting, which had just taken place, and the Midlington Ball, still to come off, where birth, beauty, dollars and diamonds flocked together as they do nowhere else out of town.

"That was an adorable frock you wore at the races, Betty," sighed Lady Dawlish, a distant connection and near neighbour of the Wincauntons, as she settled herself luxuriously down to her tea, with an air of exhausted felicity. She was a pretty little fluffy-haired American, who had caught Lord Dawlish's rather vagrant fancy some two years before, and who had succeeded in retaining it and regaining the affectionate tolerance of his people. She had a genius for gossip, which she cultivated with the finish and piquancy of a Frenchwoman; but she was a kind-hearted

little soul at bottom, and erred through want of thought rather than want of heart. Lady Betty at once disapproved of her and loved her; Virginia Dawlish admired Lady Betty more than any other living creature.

"An adorable frock, dear," she repeated, sipping her tea daintily between her sentences, "so simple and severe and white, and so exactly suited to your Saint Elizabeth sort of air! There wasn't another woman on the ground who could have stood up in it without looking a fright. It was too sweet for words on you though. Oh! and, my dear, *did* you see the Brooke woman"—Lady Dawlish was nothing if not irrelevant—"carrying on with that wicked, handsome-looking cousin—the man in the Guards? I forget his name; but Daw"—she always called her husband "Daw"—"knows him and says he is about as bad as they make them."

A pained look came into Lady Betty's lovely grey eyes. She lifted them quickly from her tea-table and gazed anxiously at Virginia.

"I saw her walking about with him several times; but, Virginia, you don't think there is any harm in it? He is her cousin, remember, and I am sure our cousins were just like brothers. And I don't suppose she has the least idea that he is bad—how should she? I couldn't bear to think any harm of Juliet Brooke; I was always so fond of her at school and so sorry for her. I feel ashamed that I haven't seen more of her since she came into this part of the world."

"I forgot she was your friend. But now, Betty, I'd just like to know what you see in her. Of course I know she is the prettiest woman in the place, barring yourself, and if you were that sort of woman, you ought to like her as a foil. Her wonderful golden hair and her blue eyes set off your masses of black waves and your great dark eyes to perfection. But when you've granted her beauty, and only an outside kind of beauty, mind!—you have intellect and heart in your face, my sweet Bet—I don't see what in the world you see to care about. Besides, she's *bourgeoise*, for all her slim figure and small hands and feet, and pretty pink and white skin. I'm a better bred-looking woman than she is, and I don't set up for being the real genuine article like you and Dawlish."

"You are good enough for us and for Dawlish," remarked Lady Betty, with an amused smile, taking advantage of the moment's pause in Lady Dawlish's vehement talk; "but I like

Juliet for herself. She has a weak nature, and she isn't overburdened with brains, but she is very loving and very lovable, and very true to her friends. I never heard her say an unkind word of any one; and if only Mr. Brooke understood her better, I'm sure they would be happy. Juliet is the sort of person who can't live without caressing affection."

"Well, there isn't much of the caresser about Mr. Brooke, anyway. I never saw such a self-contained, set sort of man," interposed Lady Dawlish, helping herself to another piece of muffin as an assistance to conversation. "I don't suppose he does understand her, and still less does she understand him. He has depths, that man, and will enough to do anything. Theoretically, of course, women worship his type—cool, calm, and masterful; but I guess it wouldn't be all beer and skittles when it came to practice—to living with it, I mean."

"Perhaps not; but I like what I have seen of Mr. Brooke. I like his dignity and self-respect, his splendid head and his strong north-country voice and manner. It is like a breath of air from the moors."

"I suppose he's as rich as Cræsus?" said Lady Dawlish.

"I believe he has something like £60,000 a year. He made his money in coals or iron—I forget which—and he bought this place, Beechfields, to please Juliet, who is so fond of hunting. He doesn't hunt himself, which is a pity, I think."

"A great pity," rejoined Virginia, flicking some stray crumbs off her Mechlin ruffles with a slender finger-tip, and speaking in a tone pregnant with meaning.

Lady Betty made an uneasy movement; she disliked innuendoes.

"It would be nicer if he rode with her," she remarked tentatively.

"It would stop people's tongues," amended Lady Dawlish, "and might drive the '*beau sabreur*' from the field, literally and figuratively. He may be a cousin, but he's a lover too, and for your pretty friend's sake it is to be wished that he hadn't taken a fancy to pursue the pleasures of the chase in Huntshire. It looks bad, even in these lax days, to be escorted about everywhere by an old lover while your husband never shows. He has put up his man and horses and himself—worse luck!—at the Midlington Arms, so he is quite handy to his dear cousins. Mr. Brooke must either be a great innocent, or a great fool. He wasn't with them at the races, and I didn't like the cousin's air

of triumph and her wretched, furtive look. You may depend on it, my dear," added Lady Dawlish, shaking an impressive little forefinger, "that girl is on the edge of a precipice, and people are beginning to give her the cold shoulder and shove her over. It's a nice little way they have! Why don't you interfere, Betty? I would if I knew her as well as you do, but it ain't my business."

"It's a delicate, dangerous thing for any one to interfere in such a case," sighed Lady Betty; "oh! I hope we are wrong about it, Virnie!"

"So do I, sweet Betty, devoutly; but anyway as I said, it's no business of mine, and I must go, or Daw will be on the war-path! Good-bye, you nice thing," she cried, as she raised herself on tip-toe to hug her stately cousin, and then with a murmur of talk and a sharp little silken rustle, left the room and drove off in her perfect little pony-carriage.

Lady Betty sank back in her chair again as the door closed, and gave a weary sigh. She longed to be able to give the lie to Virginia's suspicions of Mrs. Brooke; to her pure, sensitive soul it was little short of torture to have to think evil of any one she loved, and yet she felt the truth of the old proverb, "There is no smoke without a fire." She remembered Juliet's tendency to sentimentality in their school-days, the extraordinary power that mere physical beauty had over her, and trembled for the weak, soft creature. She had always puzzled over Juliet's marriage, for John Brooke fulfilled none of the conditions Juliet required of the man of her heart. He was no longer in his first youth, and though to an observant eye the power in the sternly-set face and figure were more attractive than the orthodox chiselled features, curling hair and languishing eyes of the school-girl's ideal, Juliet was not the person to have found it so. His manner matched his face—curt, decided, honest and unpolished—repellent to the superficial critic, though here again the student of human nature would have detected with interest, latent chivalry and unsuspected warmth of heart. Lady Betty imagined that he had been attracted by Juliet's beauty and had soon tired of it, and that she had succumbed to the fascination of his wealth. She was the daughter of a poor officer of respectable family, who had been put to school by a wealthy middle-class relative of her mother's, in order that she might make a good match, or, failing that, get a superior situation as a governess. It was while on a visit to this relation, who lived on the outskirts of a large

manufacturing town, that Juliet Vincy had met John Brooke. She had not long left school—she was barely twenty when she married; and with the exception of letters relative to the engagement and the sending and acknowledging of wedding presents, Lady Betty had heard nothing of her old school-fellow till she turned up as a resident in the same neighbourhood. Every one had followed the Wincauntons' lead and had called on the new-comers. The men liked Mr. Brooke, in spite of the coal and his non-hunting tastes—manliness always makes its way in the world—but the women were less easy to please with his wife. She was too pretty and too pleasure-loving to escape censure, but Beechlands was just too far off for Lady Betty to see her former friend very intimately, or often, and, as gossip did not find favour with her, Lady Dawlish's insinuations came as a painful revelation of public feeling.

II.

Lady Betty made up her mind, which had been harassed with doubt and anxiety ever since Lady Dawlish's visit, and set off to call on Mrs. Brooke, hoping that Providence might grant her an opening for a word of gentle advice. But her good intentions were doomed to futility by the announcement of the butler that his mistress was out riding, and might not be in till late, nor were her fears lessened on learning that Captain Vincy had gone with her, and that Mr. Brooke was from home and was not expected back till Friday. Lady Betty could have wrung her hands in despair; to-day was Tuesday; what might not happen in three days? At least Juliet's imprudence would but drive one more nail into the coffin of her good name. A happy thought struck Lady Betty; she asked for pen and paper, and wrote a hasty line to Mrs. Brooke, begging her to come to Wincauntton Court for the few days that she was alone, and giving it to the butler, bade him be sure and deliver it at once to his mistress. The same evening brought a messenger from Beechlands with Mrs. Brooke's warm thanks and excuses—none of them very weighty—for not availing herself of dear Betty's kind invitation.

For the next few days the flood-gates of gossip were opened upon poor Lady Betty; no matter where she went, no matter who she entertained or visited, she was met by Juliet's name at every turn, handled with various degrees of disapproval or con-

demnation. But if Betty Wincaunton was a fastidious woman, she was also a great-hearted and faithful one. She met questions and innuendoes with a cold, dignified reserve which put the questioner, and not Lady Betty and Mrs. Brooke, in the wrong. This so far shook one or two of her warmest admirers that they began to reconsider their harsh judgment of their pretty neighbour, and might have done much to stay the growth of scandal, had it not culminated in the report that Mrs. Brooke had at last justified the public opinion of her by running away with Captain Vincy on the very day her husband was expected home.

Lady Dawlish broke the news to Lady Betty. "You see, my dear, I was right," she said, not without a spice of unchristian pleasure in the verification of her prophecy.

Lady Betty was standing by the mantelpiece, and as the firelight fell upon her beautiful face, Virginia saw that it was as white as a sheet.

"Betty," she began with eager anxiety; "don't! she isn't worth it, darling! She——" Lady Betty turned, and laying her head against the fireplace, burst into a passion of tears.

"You don't understand," she wailed. "Oh! it is dreadful, dreadful! I won't believe it! My poor little Juliet! I can see her now, so sweet and gentle, sitting with me in our darkened bedroom, while the others were out enjoying themselves—I used to have such fearful headaches at school, Virnie—and she would sit for hours quite still, or pouring scent on my head till I grew better. The kindest, dearest little creature!"

The words came broken with sobs, touching even Lady Dawlish's lighter nature. She rose from her easy-chair, and winding her arm round Lady Betty's waist, drew her down into an oak settle that stood by the fire, and kissed and stroked her cheek in silence.

"Dear Virnie," murmured her cousin, "you are too good and kind! Do try and think the best of Julie, and say all you can for her till we know the worst for an absolute certainty. There may be some mistake."

"So there may," conceded Virginia, with suspicious alacrity, "and to please you, my Betty, I am prepared to swear that your Mrs. Brooke is an angel of innocence!"

"I must go over to-morrow and try and see her," said Lady Betty. She was too much in earnest to notice Lady Dawlish's flippant little lift of the eye-brows.

"Go, by all means," the latter rejoined.

But before the next afternoon Mr. Wincaunton had given his wife a modified version of the story which was too circumstantial to be disbelieved. It seemed that Mrs. Brooke had actually flown with her cousin and had accidentally encountered her husband on their way up to town. Mr. Brooke had brought his wife back, and Captain Vincy had continued his journey, with, presumably, no likelihood of return.

"You had better postpone your call, Betty," Ronald had remarked, drily, and on second thoughts Lady Betty decided to take his advice. The fact that the sinner was her friend did not lessen the sin in her eyes, but she resolutely declined to discuss the matter, even with Lady Dawlish. It was a nine days' wonder for the rest of the neighbourhood, and then it died away in the excitement of preparation for the Midlington Ball, to be held in another ten days' time; not, however, before society had decided to "cut" Mrs. Brooke.

Meanwhile Lady Betty suffered acutely. Never before had her personal affections come into open conflict with her principles. She had ideas on the subject of womanly dignity and purity, which, alas! seem to be fast growing obsolete, or at best talked of as "strait-laced." To her simple whiteness of soul, the fact that Juliet had returned to her husband in no way lessened the horror she felt at the sin she had committed against him. Had she been a stranger to her, or a mere acquaintance, she would not have had a doubt. She would have regretted the necessity of expunging the delinquent from the list of her friends and neighbours, but she would have done it without a moment's hesitation. But this was so different! She loved Juliet, in spite of her weaknesses, or rather because of them, though she could not have reasoned out this inconsistency, and she knew that Juliet loved her. She must seem to break faith with her old friend, or give up her most deeply-rooted principles and practice.

She was at the height of misery and indecision, when a message was brought to her in her boudoir from Mr. Brooke.

"Might he have a few moments' conversation with her?"

It was twelve o'clock, and Lady Betty was not in the habit of receiving morning callers. She hesitated.

"Did Mr. Brooke wish to see Mr. Wincaunton?" she asked.

"No, my lady, he asked for your ladyship," replied the butler respectfully.

"Very well; you can show Mr. Brooke up, Mercer, and let your master know he is here."

"Master is out, my lady."

"Then let him know when he comes in."

The servant withdrew, and Lady Betty rose to face the situation; her heart was beating painfully; she felt sure this was no ordinary visit. But John Brooke, as he walked into the room, saw nothing of her agitation. He was aware of but one fact, that here was a most good and lovely woman, and the only woman who had power to help him in his trouble. He looked ten years older than when Lady Betty had last seen him, and the haunting wretchedness of his eyes drove the tears into her own. She moved towards him, and laid her slender hand in his.

"You want to see me?" she said in her clear, sweet voice.

"I want to talk to you for a few minutes alone, if I may. I don't want to be interrupted. It's a matter of life and death to me."

The note of suffering in his voice went to Lady Betty's heart.

"There's no fear of our being disturbed," she said kindly; "this is my quiet hour that I can count on having all to myself."

Mr. Brooke made no apology for breaking in upon his hostess's privacy, he was too deeply agitated for conventionalities to appeal to him. He refused the arm-chair she offered him, and turned abruptly to her.

"Lady Betty, I want to tell you a story; have you the patience to listen to it?"

Lady Betty murmured an assent, and fixed her lovely troubled eyes upon his worn face. She was profoundly interested in what he had to say; she interrupted him with no useless comment, but her very presence breathed the sympathy that was filling her soul.

"I will make it as short as I can," he said, with a dreary smile. "I am a coal merchant, a man of the people, but I was the son of one of the best women God ever made. Thank God, she died years ago! I was brought up—in a stern fashion I suppose people would call it nowadays—with old-fashioned ideas of purity and honour. Duty was the mainspring of the conduct and lives of the women about me, and you mayn't believe it, Lady Betty, but I never came in contact with an unworthy or a light woman till after I married. You know how I met Juliet, and what she was when I met her; the sweetest creature I had ever seen."

He stopped for command over his voice; memories too deep for words threatened his self-control pitifully.

"Lady Betty," he went on reverently, "I can never tell you—I don't want even to try and tell you, it would seem like profanation—how I worshipped Juliet then, and how I love her now! But I never understood her; I know now that I never understood her. I only knew one sort of woman, the woman like my mother, calm, dignified, loving deeply, but not given to much demonstration of affection. I didn't know the woman who wants her husband to remain her lover not only in his heart and thoughts, but in outward expression. Juliet is that kind of woman, and I never guessed it. I never realized that my silence and reticence would seem to her coldness, or loss of love. I suppose I froze the love in her, frightened her, in short, for she began to avoid me, and lost all her pretty little endearing ways. Then he—that scoundrel!"—the words hissed through his teeth and his face grew more set and stern—"he came on to the scene. I never suspected! he was her cousin, and I overlooked the fact that she was weak, and that I was leaving her to herself—fool that I was! I went away on business for a few days; I was more miserable than I can say. I loved her too much for my peace of mind, and yet I felt I was losing her heart, even if I had ever had it, which I began to doubt. I doubted most things, but I never doubted her faith. I was unexpectedly called to London, and went direct up from my place of business. I got out of the train at Bletchley and came straight upon my wife and that—that man. My God! I shall never forget it! I knew how it was in a second. I walked up to her and took her by the arm, quite gently—I don't know why I didn't kill her—and led her away. I even asked her if she had any luggage. She was too frightened to speak, but she shook her head. There was a down train going at that moment, and I put her into it and got in myself. She never once looked at him, and he made no attempt to follow her. If he had,"—his voice sent a thrill of fear to Lady Betty's heart—"if he had, I would have killed him. When the train had got out of the station she came across the carriage and fell at my feet like a dead creature. I think I must have turned to stone, for I heard her sobbing there, words that hadn't any meaning for me. At last I realized that she was telling me she had only wronged me in intention, never by any deed except this flight. 'You had given up caring for me, and I was so frightened of you, and I wanted some one to love me. If you had only loved me a little, I would never have listened to him,' she kept on saying, and I sat and looked at her and never said a

word, bad or good. I think at last she grew desperate, for she cried out, 'Oh! don't you see I love you, only you, John, only you never cared!' She was speaking the truth, thank God! whatever faults she may have, falsehood is not one of them. I knew she was speaking the truth, Lady Betty, and something seemed to give way in my heart, and I stooped down and picked her up, and she lay in my arms like a child. From that moment it was right with us."

His voice broke, and he stopped and looked at Lady Betty; she was crying softly.

"Lady Betty," he went on, "I believe her, but the world won't. Won't! what am I saying?" he cried passionately, "it must, it shall believe her. I want your help to make it. You know your power with these people; help me to save Juliet's name from them! It kills me that any one should think evil of her; but if I took her away it would do no good, the story would cling to her still. Don't say you don't believe her, you won't help her!"

Lady Betty had risen, and was standing before him; the tears were running down her cheeks. He took her hands in his and held them in his firm grasp. "You are a good, pure woman, and Juliet loves you. She is so young and so alone, she has no mother, no sister, no child; help her, for pity's sake!"

"I will go to her to-day, and if it is in my power to save her I will do it. Her good name is as dear to me as my own," cried Lady Betty.

John Brooke looked at the beautiful, noble face for a moment, then stooped down and pressed the hands he held in his reverently to his lips.

"God bless you!" he said simply.

III.

"Daw," remarked Lady Dawlish on the morning of the ball at breakfast, "do you know they say that Betty Wincaunton was seen driving with Juliet Brooke yesterday!"

"You don't say so!" ejaculated her husband, looking up from his coffee. "Then I suppose we were all wrong about Mrs. Brooke," he added, simply.

Virginia gazed at him for a moment in wide-eyed astonishment, which gradually gave way to an expression of admiration and amusement.

"Dawlish," she cried, solemnly, "you are just too sweet for anything, and I must kiss you!"

She fluttered round the table, looking like a soft summer cloud in her white breakfast gown, and perching herself on Lord Dawlish's knee, took his long, brown face between her dainty little hands and kissed it fervently. He returned the embrace with a hug and a look of gratified embarrassment.

"I'm flattered by your approbation, my love, but I don't see what I've said to arouse it."

"Why, Daw, you don't mean to tell me that you think that woman is innocent just because Betty was seen with her?"

"Well, don't you see, Virnie, Betty isn't the sort of woman to make a mistake of that kind; if she's a friend of any one it's a sort of guarantee of their respectability. If I lost faith in Betty's judgment, I should be all at sea."

"And then they say there is no real power in consistent goodness!" cried Virginia, getting off her husband's knee; "for my part I don't believe it was Betty who was driving with her; I pin my faith every bit as firmly to her as you do, only I ought to be jealous that you think so much more of her than you do of me!" She said this in a tone of infantine reproach, and made a delightful little pout at him as he caught her by the arm and drew her down to him.

"You suit me best, little woman. I admire Betty awfully, but I should have been afraid of her, bless you!"

"All the same," sighed Virginia, "I wish I were more like her; and oh!" she continued with characteristic irrelevance, "I wish I knew what she was going to wear at the ball! I did ask her, and she said 'Something white!' So unsatisfactory! White means anything, from a drabbly tulle to a perfect dream of loveliness."

"Well, I reckon she'll take the shine out of some of you, anyway," drawled Dawlish, as he left the table.

"I hope you don't think you are talking American?" asked Lady Dawlish, scornfully.

"No, my love; only Virginian," and with a duck of the head to avoid the napkin-ring his wife indignantly flung after him, his lordship made a laughing escape to the study.

Virginia withdrew upstairs to take another look at her own gown for the great event. It was the creation of a celebrated Parisian *artiste*—it would be an insult to call her a mere dress-maker—and was a marvel of pale-pink silk, gauze and roses. As

Virginia stood arrayed in it before her long glass that evening, she was justified in her smiling satisfaction.

A more bewitching little figure it would be hard to imagine, and as she entered the ball-room with her husband an hour later, she knew she was the best-dressed woman present. But then Lady Betty had not arrived.

"The Wincauntons haven't turned up yet. Everybody else seems to have arrived," remarked a tall, odd-looking young man, who was noting Lady Dawlish's name on his programme. "I hear they are coming quite a large party. Ronald has actually persuaded the old Duchess of Southmolton to grace the ball with her august presence!"

"Goodness! How terrible!" interrupted Lady Dawlish. "We shall all have to be so dreadfully on our P.'s and Q.'s! Why, Betty is fast, compared with her!"

"Oh, come now!" remonstrated the Honourable Dan Lovel, turning his single eye-glass reproachfully on Virginia. It had no visible string to attach it to his person, yet he hunted, danced, and played tennis without losing his grip of it for a single moment. To Virginia it had always been an object of intense fascination, and she and the Wincaunton children, who had christened Mr. Lovel "The Man with the Glass Eye," had many a bet as to how and when it would fall.

"I wish I knew how you keep it in, Dan! I believe you sleep with it like that," she murmured, with lazy impertinence.

Mr. Lovel laughed good-humouredly, and went on with his list of the Wincaunton party.

"Well, then there's a bevy of girls and men I don't know from Adam; but Hawkshead is there."

"Oh! is he?" exclaimed Lady Dawlish eagerly. "I'm so glad! He's far the best of the Windermere boys, and Betty's pet brother. You'll like him, Delia," she added, turning to a witch-like little lady she had brought with her, an American heiress she had known in her girlish days, who was now taking notes of everything and everybody with an energy peculiar to her countrywomen. She had already quite a crowd of young men about her, fascinated by her brilliant weirdness.

"Now, Mr. Lovel," she asked, in her little high-pitched voice, "who is this Lady Betty? and are her frocks so very wonderful?"

"I believe they are, Miss Van Schenck, but then I'm only an ignorant male, and I may be mistaken."

"Well, I must say you don't look like seeing very far," she

rejoined coolly, with a glance at the eye-glass that sent her admirers into fits of silent merriment. "But, anyway, what's *he* like—Mr. Wincanton? How in the world do you say it? Oh! yes, *Winkton*—fancy now! how English to go and spoil a pretty name like that! It's aristocratic, I suppose?"

"Very," rejoined Mr. Lovel gravely.

"Ah, well! but what *is* he like? They say she married him for love."

"He is considered extremely like me," said Mr. Lovel mendaciously, and glancing modestly round to his friends for approval.

"Why, whatever did she see in him then?" ejaculated Miss Delia naïvely, and in a shrill *staccato*.

A burst of delighted laughter greeted this sally. Miss Van Schenck looked about her with an air of childish astonishment, infinitely amusing to Lady Dawlish, who knew her friend's little ways.

"You needn't ask any more questions, for here comes Mr. Wincanton with the Duchess of Southmolton, and there's dear Hawkshead and a lot of girls, and—— Goodness! Mr. Brooke! and——" She stopped and gasped for breath.

With her graceful head bent towards John Brooke, who was talking smilingly to her, came Lady Betty Wincanton, a dream of beauty, in a gown whose perfection baffles description. It was of white brocade and embroidery, severely simple as were all Lady Betty's gowns, but with lines and folds that would have ravished the soul of an artist. But who, in wonder's name, was the woman who walked beside her, her lovely fair head on a level with Lady Betty's dark one, her lissom slenderness as beautiful in its way as the other's stately grace, her rose-blush complexion acting as an admirable foil to the ivory pallor of her companion's more chiselled features? Who was this whose gown matched Lady Betty's, line for line, fold for fold, shade for shade? There was but one difference. Lady Betty had on the famous Mendip diamonds, lent to her by her mother-in-law, whereas the fairer and younger-looking woman wore pearls as perfect and priceless as the Countess's jewels.

For one moment the whole roomful of people stood bewildered at the lovely apparition, and then the truth flashed upon them.

Lady Betty had chosen the most marked way that lay in her power of protesting her belief in her friend's innocence, and had accorded to Juliet Brooke a favour she had denied to her own sisters. Josephine, with the help of Juliet's maid, had duplicated

her mistress's gown, and it was hard to say which of the two beautiful women did most justice to her clever brain and fingers.

Lord Hawkshead, turning round, claimed Mrs. Brooke's hand, and led her off to dance. The whole room was in a buzz of excited conversation.

"I shall never believe Maria Staunton again," whispered Mrs. de Vere Tomson indignantly to her neighbour, Lady Bridge; "this is the second time I've been taken in by her love of gossip. I had it from her, you know, that Mrs. Brooke had really gone off with the cousin!"

"And you don't think——" began Lady Bridge, her fair, fat face puckered up with perplexity.

"My dear, how can I? Of course the whole story was a fabrication. Would she have come with the Wincauntons and the Duchess, who is more particular even than Lady Betty? Would Mr. Brooke have had the face to bring her here? and would Lady Betty have done a thing she's never done for a single other woman and have let her copy her gown as if she were her twin-sister? I ask you!"

At the same moment a little elderly gentleman, irreproachably got up and with a clever, kindly face, walked over to where her Grace of Southmolton sat in state amongst the chaperons.

"Duchess, I should like to have the rights of that story," he said with the air of one whose requests were never refused. Nor were they often, for by some happy combination of talent and attraction Mr. St. John Vignolles had become the spoilt pet of society, whose follies he caricatured in his novels, but to whose weaknesses he ministered even while he affected to despise them.

The Duchess looked at him keenly; he was a favourite of hers and she knew him for an inveterate gossip.

"It will be, 'I had it from the dear Duchess of Southmolton' to all his acquaintance for the next fortnight at least," she said to herself. Aloud she asked, "What story, St. John?"

"The story that is afloat about our pretty friend there. I own I am puzzled. When it comes to Lady Betty playing Corsican sister to her in this way, one doesn't know what to believe."

"Yes, I was a little inclined to think Betty had made a mistake there, but really now I see them together the effect

quite justifies the venture. Don't you think so?" she asked, glancing indulgently at the two beauties who happened to be standing side by side at that moment.

"In the way of effect it is a stroke of genius on Lady Betty's part. But what really happened about Mrs. Brooke? Where is the cousin?"

"Ah! yes, there comes in the want of *savoir faire*," remarked her Grace, "for you must allow, St. John, that with all her beauty there's a touch of breeding lacking somewhere. I suppose running about with handsome cousins is a harmless amusement in Manchester or wherever she comes from," the Duchess's tone relegated that problematical region to the sphere of the impossible—"but it won't do in Huntshire, as she has found out, poor child! for a day's shopping in London with the wicked Guardsman has nearly cost her her reputation. However, as Mr. Brooke met them and came back with her, even Huntshire isn't left with much to talk about. Her husband ought to have known better, though, than to have had such a *mauvais sujet* about his house."

"And that was all," sighed Vignolles, eyeing Mrs. Brooke through his glasses. "Well, I'm glad of it," he added warmly, "for she is a sweet pretty young creature."

"She is quite lovely," corrected her Grace somewhat severely, "and with Lady Betty to refer to and as a friend she ought to do well."

And so she did. That terrible hour in the train had revealed the husband and wife to each other. She never again gave him cause for anxiety; her weakness gathered strength from his strength, and his reserve melted and his manners softened under her gentle, caressing nature. Children came to brighten her life and to deepen the love that bound her to her husband. Captain Vincy troubled the neighbourhood no more with his unwelcome presence, and Beechfields and Wincaunton Court remained on the closest and happiest terms of intimacy. Mrs. Brooke's good name was re-established beyond dispute.

Society, in the more conventional sense of the word, is at best a strange and paradoxical institution, little affected by the great things of the spirit; and what all the faith and friendship in the world could never have done to reestablish Juliet Brooke in its good graces, had been achieved by the duplication of Lady Betty's ball-gown.

POLITICAL PAMPHLETS BY MEN OF GENIUS.



TO some of us, when dwelling with complacency upon the wealth of that noble literature which Macaulay styles the most lasting of the many glories of England, the reflection must have occurred, how small a part of that literature is immortal ; nay, how small is the part which has survived the mutations of two or three centuries ! At best a national literature lives only in the memories of a fraction of the nation, in the memories of those who have leisure and taste to appreciate works which have lost the charm of novelty and the gloss of fashion. Even among these, how few are really familiar with the authors of any age but their own ! How little of the literature, say, of the seventeenth century, is known at first hand to the best-educated Englishmen ! A few of its great poems all persons with self-respect profess to have read. But what has become of its most remarkable prose writings ? Bacon's 'Essays' are read in schools ; Milton's 'Areopagitica' is set for examinations ; Clarendon's 'History of the Rebellion' is still consulted by those who concern themselves with English annals ; and here and there a devout or curious reader may have brushed the dust from a volume of Jeremy Taylor. But who turns over the pages of those sermons of Barrow which the great Chatham recommended to his son as the noblest models of English eloquence ? Who bestows an idle hour upon those prefaces of Dryden, which to a connoisseur so accomplished as Charles Fox seemed among the purest sources of English undefiled ? A new age finds Barrow heavy and Dryden superficial. Soon or late a twilight falls upon the gods themselves, and in a few generations the immortals of literature find their shrines forsaken and their laurels withered.

The oblivion which so speedily descends upon many of our classics has causes, some of which affect all literature equally

whilst others affect English literature with peculiar force. All monuments of genius are more perishable than we like to own. From its very birth a famous book carries within itself the seeds of decay. Every revolution of thought, every accession of knowledge, every fresh wave of feeling, every new phase of experience, removes the reader further and further from the writer. The old-fashioned wisdom seems childish, the old-fashioned sentiment seems frigid. The arguments which convinced another age, in our age conclude nothing. The eloquence which thrilled our forefathers makes their descendants yawn. Stung with disappointment, we impeach the skill of the artist, we impeach our own taste ; in these sad partings we find fault with everything except the destiny of mankind, which makes them inevitable. We part, in spite of struggles and regrets, slowly, but certainly we part. This sense of distance must be felt by all who retrace the growth of a literature which has lived through many ages. It is not felt by the student of English literature alone.

But English prose literature is more subject than most others to one species of decay. An exceptionally large part of it has a direct practical aim. To this practical aim it owes some of its greatest merits ; its rude vigour and its prevailing common-sense. But this practical aim can be attained only by arts irreconcilable with lasting worth. No writer can produce an immediate effect unless he is in sympathy with the public, or with some large portion of the public. If he shares the ideas and the passions of the hour, he cannot write for all time. If he is to convince here and now, he must not see too wide, he must not search too deep, he must not soar too high. He must not draw distinctions too fine for a multitude to grasp ; he must not indulge feelings too fine for a faction to share.

“ He must be bold, proud, pleasant, resolute,
And now and then stab as occasion serves.”

And as he must take care that his matter shall not be too good, so he must take care that his style shall not be too exquisite. Plain palates like rough flavours. Men hot with passion do not care for a style which renders with precision each delicate shade of thought. They like a style which expresses most forcibly what they most intemperately feel. In one word, immediate effect is obtained only at the expense of permanent effect. A writer striving after practical results may be hampered by his very genius. Practical results are often attained by a writer without any genius at all.

Considerations like these can hardly fail to strike any one who turns over the best known of English political pamphlets. The application of literary skill to political purposes is scarcely possible except in free states. In the free states of antiquity this application was made by the orator. In the free states of to-day this application is made by the journalist. But in the seventeenth and even in the eighteenth century political discussion was carried on chiefly by means of pamphlets. Interest in public affairs was felt by many whom spoken eloquence could not reach. Yet readers were not numerous enough to maintain a crowd of magazines appearing once a month, still less a crowd of newspapers appearing every day and every hour. Accordingly pamphlets did most of the work which at other times has been done by means of speeches or of newspaper articles. Especially was this the case in the seventeenth century. We hardly realize the bulk of printed matter under which the presses groaned at every crisis in the political and religious struggle of the Stuart period. It was so great as to suggest wonder where sufficient buyers or readers could be found. In the eighteenth century the newspaper and the review began to displace the pamphlet. When Parliamentary debates came to be freely reported, statesmen at all events lost their chief motive for writing pamphlets. But it was not until our own century that the pamphlet became obsolete as a political weapon.

By far the greater number of these pamphlets had a merely momentary value. But a few had something more. Most of the celebrated English men of letters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wrote at least a pamphlet or two, and some of them unfortunately wrote little else, at least in prose. Among these pamphleteers of genius three stand conspicuous above all others, Milton, Swift, and Burke. Three more illustrious names cannot be found in the whole range of our literature. The pamphlets written by these men are still numbered among our classics. A strictly literary criticism of their pamphlets is the object of this paper. By a strictly literary criticism is meant a criticism which as far as possible avoids an attempt to pronounce upon the merits of the particular controversies which gave occasion to the writings criticised. Limited in this way, the criticism of a political pamphlet may sometimes be worth undertaking, because such a pamphlet may have an interest and a value which outlast the discussion that gave it birth. A fugitive publication may be of lasting worth because of the soundness of

its substance, because of its moral and political wisdom, or because of the excellence of its form, because of the force and beauty of its expression. The pamphlet especially affords freer scope to genius than can ever be afforded by the newspaper. The pamphlet is not tied down to those hard conditions of time and space which govern the leading article. It is not robbed by editorial supervision of all personal force and flavour. The pamphlet may attain to character and individuality. Things of general human interest have now and then found their way into pamphlets, oftenest, perhaps, into those pamphlets which were of little use towards the purpose aimed at by the author.

Of the three men whose names have been mentioned, Milton had the most powerful genius, yet was the least admirable pamphleteer. That this should have been so, will not surprise anybody who considers Milton's bent of mind and way of life. A poet by natural vocation, a student by deliberate choice, Milton lived in habitual commerce with his own high imaginings and with the noblest thoughts of the mighty dead. A temper as fastidious as it was severe may be traced in the fewness of his friendships and in the jars of his domestic life. Passionate as were his love of country and desire of fame, their singular intensity drew him not nearer to but further from the crowd of his fellow-men. Such a man was not likely to be a serviceable party hack. He was aware of his own unfitness for this drudgery: "Knowing myself inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account, but of my left hand."* Yet he would not refrain from a species of writing which alone enabled him to take part in a contest as thrilling to him as to Hampden or to Cromwell. So he gave twenty years, his eyesight, and the best strength of an incomparable genius to writing pamphlets which had but a restricted influence upon the public.

The most obvious shortcoming of these pamphlets is the lack of contact with the circumstances and the opinion of the day. Compared with Swift's or Burke's pamphlets, these are the pamphlets of an inspired book-worm. Not himself a public man like Burke, nor even living habitually with public men like Swift, Milton was at a hopeless disadvantage in a time when Parliamentary debates and State papers were kept secret, when newspapers were only beginning to appear, and when one part of England scarcely knew as much about the thoughts and feelings

* 'Reason of Church Government.'

of another part as we know about the thoughts and feelings of Berlin or Madrid. Milton as a journalist could never be up to date. It was impossible for him to catch the latest breath of an agitated public. He wanted that everyday knowledge which is the one thing needful for an everyday argument. Thus at the very moment when the Commonwealth was crumbling into military anarchy, Milton was still confident that it could be made perpetual. After setting out his plan of a republic, he writes:—

"The Grand Council being thus firmly constituted to perpetuity, and still upon the death or default of any member supplied and kept in full number, there can be no cause alleged why peace, justice, plentiful trade and all prosperity should not thereupon ensue throughout the land; with as much assurance as can be of human things, that they shall so continue (if God favour us and our wilful sins provoke Him not) even to the coming of our true and rightful and only to be expected King, only worthy, as He is our only Saviour, the Messiah, the Christ, the only Heir of His Eternal Father, the only by Him anointed and ordained since the work of our redemption finished, universal Lord of all mankind." *

These words were written in the year 1660, just before the Restoration of Charles the Second. The writer who used them moved perhaps in a higher sphere, but not in the sphere of human policy.

Nor had Milton that innate political tact which goes far to supply the want of political knowledge. He discussed politics, sometimes with the inspiration of a poet, sometimes with the pedantry of a schoolmaster, but never as a man accustomed to manage mankind would discuss them. The most fearless and outspoken of enthusiasts, he everywhere acknowledged, nay asserted with peculiar fervour and insistence, opinions and aspirations which might not be unworthy of John Milton, but which must have seemed as dangerous and detestable to the average Puritan as to the average Cavalier. In these pamphlets can be found no trace of the art so familiar to advanced politicians, the art of getting dull people to accept new principles by withdrawing their minds from the consequences which these principles must involve. Were this all, we could not regret that Milton lacked the low cunning of a partisan. But his deficiency went further. He lacked the equable prudence of a true statesman. When he took a side in the debates of rougher and coarser natures he lost all balance and all measure. Those who upheld Monarchy and Prelacy he

* 'The Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth.'

esteemed altogether bad. Those who warred against Monarchy and Prelacy he esteemed altogether good. In this simple faith he was often rudely tried. When the Long Parliament triumphed, he was disappointed to find that new presbyter was but old priest writ large. Such will ever be the disappointment of the dreamer who looks for the fulfilment of his ideals by men who are powerful because they are practical.

Even the learning which these pamphlets display is rather a blemish than a merit. With too much erudition to please the multitude, they have too little science to satisfy a philosopher. They exhibit knowledge in its least alluring or improving form; a mass of citations and references, undigested and chaotic, unleavened by historic sense or by critical discrimination. Authorities ancient and modern, Scriptural and classical, genuine and spurious, are all equally laid under contribution for the purpose in hand. Learning thus employed, even by a tranquil seeker after truth, would be supremely useless. Employed thus by an angry partisan, learning becomes absolutely ridiculous. It is true that in making this use of his learning Milton was no more singular than in his lavish use of ferocious invective. Pedantry and scurrility disfigured the works of most learned men in that age. Against Milton himself the injudicious and uncritical use of authorities ought not to be made a reproach, but in his writings it is a grave fault, seeing that it makes them obsolete and disagreeable.

The one thing which redeems these pamphlets is their revelation of a heroic nature whose splendour no fumes of controversy or mist of bewildered learning can obscure. This intense and glowing mind, devoted with entire simplicity to what it deemed the cause of God, compels our admiration even when it most repels us by its arrogance, its injustice, its bitter and implacable party-spirit. Eminently characteristic of the man was the love of liberty which inspires these writings. The liberty for which Milton thirsted was above all things liberty of conscience. "Although I dispraise not the defence of just immunities, yet love my peace better if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties."* It is true, unhappily, that he grudged this liberty to Roman Catholics, and in a less degree to Anglican Protestants. The only valid excuse which we can urge for this large exception to a scheme of general liberty lies in the fact that neither Anglican

* 'Areopagitica,'

nor Catholic would at that time have consented to tolerate other forms of Christianity. The Independent was forced to choose whether he would be hammer or anvil. Saints might have chosen the part of the anvil; the part of the hammer was naturally preferred by men.

So long as Milton might secure liberty of conscience, he was not nice about political details. He does not seem to have cared particularly for popular government. He seems to have expected that under the Commonwealth, as under the Monarchy, the nobility and gentry would remain the leaders of the nation. He proposed in one of his latest pamphlets that the Grand Council which he wished to substitute for Parliament should consist of members holding their seats for life or during good behaviour. When Cromwell expelled the Long Parliament, Milton forgave the outrage which to him seemed the only way of securing the benefits won in the Civil War. When the Commonwealth was tottering, he wrote in the same sense:—

“They who past reason and recovery are devoted to kingship, perhaps will answer that a greater part by far of the nation will have it so, the rest therefore must yield. Not so much to convince these, which I little hope, as to confirm those who yield not, I reply; that this greatest part have both in reason and the trial of just battle lost the right of their election what the government shall be; of them who have not lost that right, whether they for kingship be the greater number, who can certainly determine? Suppose they be, yet of freedom they all partake alike, one main end of government; which if the greater part value not, but will degenerately forego, is it just or reasonable that most voices, against the main end of government, should enslave the less number, that would be free? more just it is, doubtless, if it come to force, that a less number compel a greater to retain, which can be no wrong to them, that liberty than that a greater number, for the pleasure of their baseness compel a less, most injuriously to be their fellow-slaves. They who seek nothing but their own just liberty have always right to win it and to keep it, whenever they have power, be the voices never so numerous that oppose it. And how much we above others are concerned to defend it from kingship, and from them who in pursuance thereof so perniciously would betray us and themselves to most certain misery and thralldom will be needless to repeat.”*

In truth, Milton's love of liberty was far removed from the

* ‘The Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth.’

love of liberty so widely professed to-day. Milton was by circumstances a rebel, but by temper an aristocrat. He did not stand in awe of the masses, or profess to copy their ideas or to share their tastes. He was morally and intellectually fastidious. He was as proud as his own Lucifer. If he was a republican, it was less because he desired to find equals than because he scorned to acknowledge a lord. He was a republican not of the modern but of the antique school. He had nourished his mind upon the utterances of Roman statesmen, and Greek philosophers, and Hebrew prophets, and he had caught their accent of conscious worth and unbending courage. This accent, however, soothes the ear neither of kings nor of crowds. Milton's republican strain will always find an echo in young and enthusiastic readers; but it will not recommend him to the general public, even when all the world has been Americanised.

In point of style Milton's pamphlets cannot be praised without reserve. They display, indeed, those literary qualities which might be expected in anything written by the author of 'Comus' or of 'Paradise Lost,' the "wealth of magnificent words," the varied music of the long and involved but carefully modulated period, and ever and anon, when rising to the height of some great argument, a swelling pomp of rhetoric, a profusion of living images which silences criticism and leaves admiration breathless. But then they have none of the literary qualities which are most essential to the pamphlet. They have not lucid order. There is in them hardly a trace of that skilful disposition of topics which multiplies the weight of an argument as much as the skilful marshalling of troops multiplies the power of an army. There is hardly a sign of that logical art which produces the greatest effect upon the reader's opinions with the least trouble to his understanding. Not all the richness of language can conceal the awkwardness of argument. Again, the undigested learning of these pamphlets is a defect in point of form as well as of substance. Long strings of citations cannot be made eloquent even by Milton. So likewise their scurrility is an artistic as well as a moral blemish. Party spirit is natural in party pamphlets; but it should not vent itself merely in downright abuse, unrelieved by wit or irony. Anger is a powerful literary motive; but only when under intellectual governance. If the angry advocate can portray characters which, possibly not appropriate to his adversaries, are yet true of certain men in every age, then he may expect to find in every age delighted readers. Possibly Aristo-

phanes and Tacitus libelled the contemporaries whom they have immortalised ; but the characters of Aristophanes and Tacitus still walk in our streets, and sit in our assemblies. The sneer of Tacitus and the caricature of Aristophanes still find a response in every reader of Latin or of Greek literature ; whilst Milton's representations of his adversaries already strike us as forced and unnatural, and merely awaken regret that so transcendent a writer should have conformed to the bad fashion of his time.

Milton's pamphlets are the uneven result of the drudgery of a man of genius in a field not truly his own. Swift's pamphlets are the triumphs of a master in the art of polemical writing. We may regret that the energies of Swift even more than of Milton were consumed in this profitless travail. Milton's poems alone would assure his fame. Swift's verses, admirable as they sometimes are, would not by themselves establish him a classic. Out of his prose, which fills fifteen volumes, only 'Gulliver's Travels,' the 'Tale of a Tub,' and the 'Journal to Stella,' have enough human interest to keep them fresh for many ages. His remaining works have been likened, not quite unjustly, to a row of rusty cannon in an old armoury. Once resistless to beat down and break in pieces, they move us now only by the faint remembrance of the havoc which they have made. Yet we must own that in controversy Swift was at home, and that the pamphlet was a form of expression well suited to his genius. Few men have joined so clear an intellect to a temper so combative. Fewer still who have felt such an agony of angry passion have been able to subdue it to an irony so grave and austere. Since Swift wrote, thousands of able men have used the pen as a weapon of political warfare, and half-a-dozen of them have become famous. But which of the half-dozen shall we place even second to Swift ? Compared with Swift, Junius is a commonplace rhetorician, Cobbett a sturdy clown, Sydney Smith a monotonous humorist. Swift plays upon every key of party emotion, and always finds the note needed at the moment. Fear and scorn, hate and distrust, anger and revenge, he can command them all. He in his own way not less than Marlborough could "ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm." He wrote his political pieces not with the left hand but with the right ; and it was the right hand of Achilles.

Judged with reference to their object, these pamphlets of Swift are among the best things in our literature. They have lost much of their interest now that the occasions which

prompted them are forgotten. Their constant bitterness, and now and then their nastiness, make them distasteful to sensitive readers. Their simplicity of style seems poverty-stricken to those who think that good writing means fine writing. But those who know what style means will own these pamphlets models of literary art. To be perfectly familiar yet by no means vulgar, to be precise without being pedantic, to argue without becoming tedious, to tell impossible things in a way which makes them seem quite natural, to prejudice your reader whilst yourself seemingly unprejudiced, to stir him to madness whilst yourself seemingly unmoved, to employ every artifice of the most dexterous advocate whilst never dropping the disguise of the modest parish priest or homely tradesman; all this Swift has done so often and with so much address, that after reading him it seems quite easy to do, and one forgets for a moment that in our literature it has been done by Swift alone. He has done the feat best in the 'Drapier's Letters.' I know of nothing else like them, and I know of nothing else which may wait longer for a rival. The reader feels that they could not have been written by a tradesman; yet he cannot well believe that they were written by the Dean. The language has all the literary qualities, yet is that of an illiterate man. The arguments are often unsound enough to find general acceptance, yet the author conceals admirably his knowledge of their unsoundness. The result of the blending of the real author and his imagined trader is as piquant to us as it was exciting to his countrymen.

About the efficacy of Swift's polemical writings there can be no question; but there has been much question as to the nature of Swift's personal opinions. Nor is this surprising when we consider Swift's peculiar position. He put forth all his powers on behalf of the Tories; but he had reached middle-life before he quitted the Whigs. He fought the battles of the Church; but he certainly had no clerical vocation. He pleaded the cause of Ireland, but the country he disliked and the bulk of the people he despised. It is therefore natural that many, especially those who disagreed with him, should have regarded this puissant champion as a mere soldier of fortune, careless for whom he fought, and chagrined only because he failed to secure his booty. What seems to confirm their suspicion is the impartial and unqualified scorn which Swift, in his freer moods, pours out upon all factions, civil or ecclesiastical. What he thought of our venerable Constitution he has betrayed in Gulliver's conversation

with the King of Brobdingnag. What he thought of politicians he has told us in the last of the 'Drapier's Letters.' "Few politicians, with all their schemes, are half so useful members of a commonwealth as an honest farmer; who, by skilfully draining, fencing, manuring and planting, hath increased the intrinsic value of a piece of land, and thereby done a perpetual service to his country, which it is a great controversy whether any of the former ever did since the creation of the world; but no controversy that ninety-nine in a hundred have done abundant mischief." What Swift thought of ecclesiastical disputes he has pretty plainly told in his 'Tale of a Tub,' and still more plainly in those famous lines on the Last Judgment, which, although disputed, seem too pungent to have come from any other author. Such a man might have been expected to set less store by the contentions of Whig and Tory, and to tolerate Nonconformists in a petty allowance of power and preferment. Yet as a Tory and Churchman Swift may have been sincere. If little prone to glorify an established order, he was apt enough to cry down the capacity of mankind. Vicious and foolish as they are, he seems to say, it is odd that they should have been able to set up any civil or ecclesiastical polity. What they have set up may be a poor contrivance; but it is as good as could be expected from them. Why trouble yourself to alter mere mechanical arrangements of state when the men upon whom all depends and for whom all exists are naturally base and necessarily miserable? Why vex your soul with the interminable wrangle of theologians when the very little which we know, or need to know, about religion is plain to every man possessed of common sense, if not puffed up with vanity and presumption? Rather let everything be and possess your soul in patience; for wisdom and endurance lessen the evils which they cannot cure. Let knaves and enthusiasts bawl for reformation; they know not what they want, or if they do, they know that they want their own advantage, not the public good.

Such, we may conjecture, was the real unaffected temper of Swift's mind. Expecting little from change, he was naturally conservative. Knowing how trivial are many of the subjects of political and ecclesiastical debate, he thought the disputants fools, and their noise a nuisance to be suppressed as speedily as possible. Sensitive to everything grotesque or frantic, he preferred a decent routine to the vagaries of enthusiasm. Constitutionally imperious and despotic, he followed his bent on taking the side of authority. Having chosen the clerical

profession, he was confirmed in all those innate propensities. He took orders at a time when the Church was making her last effort to retain exclusive domination. He felt as a personal wrong the dissidence of the crowd, the unbelief of the fine gentlemen, and the mean estimation in which his calling was held. Upon considering all these things, we shall be surprised rather at his so long remaining a Whig than at his finally becoming a Tory. Once engaged in a party conflict, he was carried by his fierce, overbearing disposition into every excess which his keen, sceptical intellect might have been expected to condemn. The inconsistency may point his own satire upon man, it should surprise only those who have been able to regulate their lives by strict syllogism.

The pamphlets of Burke are far more alive than the pamphlets of Milton or of Swift. Their peculiar freshness cannot be explained merely by their more recent date. The 'Letters of Junius' were written by a contemporary of Burke, and acquired a celebrity not inferior to that of Burke's best known writings; yet the 'Letters of Junius' have long since failed to find readers, and are steadily losing even reputation. Nor is the interest still felt in Burke's pamphlets the effect merely of excellence in style, although they possess that excellence in a very eminent degree. Burke, when discoursing of the greatest affairs at the highest pitch of his faculty, is magnificent indeed. But no more than Milton can Burke be held up as a faultless model of expression. Like other writers whose power of rhetoric is out of all proportion to their sense of humour, Burke is so uniformly elaborate and solemn as often to oppress the reader with a sense of fatigue, and now and then to force a smile at little things described in lofty terms. Nor was Burke defective merely in point of humour. He was not faultless in point of taste. Occasional extravagance in denunciation was a fault inseparable from his temperament and sanctioned by the usage of his time. Much less excusable were the physically offensive images in which he sometimes indulged. Take one instance, it is one too many. "That debt" (of the Nabob of Arcot to the East India Company) "forms the foul, putrid mucus, in which are engendered the whole brood of creeping ascarides, all the endless involutions, the eternal knot, added to a knot of those inexpugnable tape-worms which devour the nutriment and eat up the bowels of India." In point of sense as well as in point of refinement, nothing could be worse than this loathsome sentence.

If Burke's art was sometimes at fault, his matter was too often unmanageable. That this was so infers no reproach against him. The publicist, who insists upon doing his duty, must work up masses of material at once intractable and perishable, quantities of administrative financial and statistical detail which cannot be made attractive to any readers except those whose persons or property are immediately concerned. Burke was too much in earnest not to make free use of such dry knowledge, which in his speeches and pamphlets lies mingled with arguments appealing to the reason of every age, and with outbursts of pathetic or indignant eloquence able to stir the passions of every feeling heart. Thus, out of the seventy pages filled by Burke's 'Speech on the Debts of the Nabob of Arcot,' ten perhaps belong to our classical literature, whilst the remaining sixty belong merely to the politics of that day. The crowd of light and hasty readers will not stop to crush all this quartz in order to win these few ounces of gold. Even the patient and serious reader will feel that his sense of what is truly precious has been dulled by all the toil of extraction. For these treasures one must extract oneself; one cannot really master a great author in a book of excerpts. In the upshot, the student of Burke comes to limit himself more and more to the few works, such as the 'Reflections on the Revolution in France,' in which general reasoning predominates over particular data.

What really gives immortal life to these writings often hastily thrown off, is their peculiar strain of wise and suggestive thought, the wisdom of a man who has been deeply versed in public affairs, yet has never been so much immersed in business as to have no time for meditation. Destined by nature for a literary life, Burke received from circumstances a practical discipline. He was not like Milton, an enthusiastic student destitute of knowledge of the world, or like Swift, a journalist tied to the defence of measures in which he had no share. Burke was a veteran member of Parliament, and a leader of a great political party. Yet he was not like the younger Pitt, or like Sir Robert Walpole, absorbed in the toils of office and of the House of Commons. He was generally in opposition, and never in the Cabinet. He escaped the drudgery of success and the slavery of power. He had leisure to continue those noble studies which enlarge the intellect and enliven the imagination. Thus he preserved what Matthew Arnold finely styles, "a just sense of the greatness of great affairs." He never fell into the besetting sin of public life, the impiety of regarding the government of a mighty people as a

mere exercise of low cunning. He never forgot that politics means something more than the tricks of politicians. He never confused the wisdom of the statesman with the artifice of the debater or party manager. He could give lasting life and power to his studies of passing political questions, because, with a working knowledge of mankind and a remarkable mastery of detail, he blended an ideal elevation of sentiment and a philosophical breadth of conception.

It would be absurd, however, to hold up Burke as invariably and inevitably wise. His actions often and sometimes his writings were marred by the extravagance of a sensitive nature. As an Irishman and a man of letters, Burke was irritable and overstrung. Beyond all other callings, public life requires a firm, cheerful and placid temperament. Beyond all other wisdom, political wisdom is liable to be made useless by excitability. Burke's feelings were habitually in excess. He loved with passionate adoration, and hated with intense bitterness. Whilst yet young, strong and happy, he was able to govern his temperament and so to repress his inward fire, that it made itself felt only in a steady glow, giving warmth and colour to all that he wrote or said. But when old and weary, and laden with many sorrows, he too often failed to master the passion which waxed wild within him, and burst into that shrieking rhetoric which gives pain rather than conviction. In judging what Burke wrote upon the French Revolution, we must indeed remember the immensity of the interests at stake, and the horror which many of the incidents occurring in France could not fail to inspire, and if we take these things into account, we shall not condemn many passages in the 'Reflections'; but in the 'Letters on a Regicide Peace' we shall still find much that is intolerable. In judging Burke's speeches on the impeachment of Warren Hastings, we must acknowledge the uprightness of his intention and the service which he did in awakening the national conscience to the duties of Eastern Empire; but we cannot quite condone the readiness with which he adopted every charge, however improbable, and we must altogether condemn the temper in which he conducted the prosecution, the temper of a Stuart judge, a temper which defeated his purpose by awakening public sympathy for the man so savagely assailed.

From this brief comparison of the political writings of Milton, Swift, and Burke, we may conclude how hard it is to write a perfect pamphlet. We may also be led to regret that any fine

genius should spend his powers on work which, however well done, can hardly be lasting. We may regret that Milton should for twenty years have preferred the use of his left hand to the use of his right. We may regret that Swift should so often have emptied upon Whigs and Dissenters the vials of a wrath too capacious for any object less than the whole human race and its destiny. And even if we allow that instinct guided Burke into the course of industry most honourable for himself as well as most useful for his country, we must remember that some of his writing has been antiquated in the course of one hundred years, and that we cannot tell how little of it a thousand years will spare. Yet we must not indulge our regret too far. A certain waste of power is inseparable from exuberant life. Literature divorced from action is apt to languish and to pass through triviality into nothingness. If closely allied with action, literature must concern itself largely with things of transitory import, and must in some degree share their perishable nature. Before we can say, therefore, how much literary genius has been wasted in England, we must judge English literature as a whole. Under no circumstances could Milton have written many works like 'Paradise Lost,' or Swift many works like 'Gulliver's Travels,' or Burke many works like the 'Reflections on the Revolution in France.' But the one living character in 'Paradise Lost,' the character of Satan, owes much of its heroic reality to the experience of the vanquished Puritan.

"What though the field be lost,
All is not lost; the unconquerable will
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield,
And what is else not to be overcome."

So, too, the very soul of the baffled politician and exiled courtier animates those wonderful pictures of human folly and baseness, which at once fascinate and repel the reader of Gulliver's adventures. So, too, the best passages of the 'Reflections on the Revolution in France' express the wisdom gathered in a long life of action as well as of study, of converse with living men and with public affairs as well as with letters and with philosophy. These treasures are ours. Could we have had them at a cheaper rate? Who knows?

F. C. MONTAGUE.

SCENES IN RUSSIA.

BY ANDRÉE HOPE.

PART II.

"ANITSCKA," said I, "I cannot allow these chickens and these calves to remain any longer in the kitchen. I told you this yesterday, and also the day before, but here they still are."

"The little mother shall be obeyed," says Anitscka, with obliging alacrity.

Nevertheless, although I have had an outhouse prepared for the calves and have had perches put up for the chickens, with the exception that the former are tied near the door, no change takes place. It is very difficult to be angry with Anitscka, my bare-legged, soft-eyed Russian handmaid. She is so smiling, so good-tempered, so obliging, so ready with her promises, but alas! those promises are never fulfilled. On the subject of cleanliness our battles are of daily, nay, almost hourly occurrence. While I work with her, while my searching eyes are upon her, all goes fairly well; but let those eyes be removed, let her be for a few minutes relieved of the incubus of my alarming presence, then Anitscka finds she has her duties or pleasures elsewhere. The cows must be looked at, the dog patted, or, still worse, some friend appears in the street with whom she must have a few moments' gossip.

One visitor is peculiarly trying to my patience, for what charms pretty Anitscka can see in Koris are difficult for an outsider to discover. All the love-making in words must be done by Anitscka, for except when opening his great jaws to swallow down a glass of kevas, or a spoonful of cabbage soup, Koris' mouth is solely devoted to his pipe. But it may be that his sentiments exhale in the mighty puffs of smoke, and the beatings of his heart are emitted in the heavy fumes of his tobacco. As to

his face, it expresses nothing whatever ; his stolid features might be cut out of wood, so steadily vacant are they.

When Koris appears in the street, or in our little yard, Anitscka's attention immediately becomes diverted from the cooking or cleaning in which she is engaged. When Koris proceeds to lean with his back against the window, Anitscka's mind is hopelessly gone. He never seems to look at her, or to pay her the least attention, but the fact of his presence is an absorbing interest. All I can ever then do is to send Koris on some errand ; but I am conscious that this is an unfeeling remedy, and one I am not sufficiently hard-hearted to resort to frequently, for no sooner has he disappeared, than Anitscka's heart seems about to burst, so dreadful and profound are her sighs, and even rivulets of salt tears occasionally flow into the soup she is preparing.

Koris, both as a soldier and a servant, is the soul of fidelity and trustworthiness, but he has his failings, and they are such as make me doubtful of his merits as a husband. Koris, like too many of his countrymen, loves *vodka* to excess, and in his cups Koris is Koris no longer. A raving, howling madman takes his place. A madman who roars, sings, and yells until he falls, a shameful, inert mass upon the ground, there to remain in drunken insensibility until the fumes of the murderous liquor have passed from his besotted brain. Then Koris arises, and shakes himself like a dog awakening from sleep. With shaking limbs he staggers off to the bath, and first boils and then freezes himself in orthodox Russian fashion. However, this refreshing process restores his senses, and ere long, arranged with military neatness and precision, he presents himself before his master, composed and taciturn as ever. Vain are reproaches, equally vain are remonstrances. "A man must enjoy himself sometimes, Excellency," is invariably his calm reply.

But such being the habits of the suitor, I thought it my duty to speak to the girl.

"Anitscka," said I, "are you going to marry Koris?"

"Indeed yes, little mother."

"Do you love Koris?" continued I interrogatively.

"How should I know, little mother?" was the bashful reply.

"But surely," continued I, "if you do not know whether you love him or not, why not wait until you find a better man?"

"A better man than Koris, little mother? no, that would not be possible. Koris has a horse, little mother, and a cart. Oh! there is no one better than him."

With such attractions I felt more expostulation would be useless, and as my acquaintance with soldiers and *moujiks* increased, I respected the horse and cart more, and thought less evil of the *vodka* drinkers. In fact, how can a perfectly uneducated man amuse himself? In most countries there are national games, besides the constant amusement of dancing. In Russia there are scarcely any national games, and in the north not much dancing. For the old, and even for the middle-aged, gossip and drinking are the only resources. And even gossip is restricted. It embraces little more than the affairs of the *mir* or community of villages, and should the *starost*, or head man, be present, even these affairs must be spoken of with caution. Few foreigners are aware of the great power exercised by the village tribunals, of which the *starost* is the head. These tribunals have been erected by the peasants themselves, and against their decisions there is very little power of appealing. Much has been said respecting the tyranny practised by the nobles, but their tyranny or despotism does not equal the thralldom in which the peasants are held by their own village tribunals.

It will be perceived that I am no longer an inmate of the Karàsoumoff Palace. So kind and generous are Russians, that I believe I might have remained for years as a nominal *dame de compagnie* to the Princess had I so wished, but a few months after my dear pupil's marriage I had the rare good fortune to become the wife of Colonel Vassiloffsky. My husband was soon afterwards appointed to a distant station, and so, when I left Moscow, I had little chance of seeing that interesting town, and the kind friends I had made there, for many years to come. However, our own speedy departure spared me the pang of another parting from my dear Princess Ariane, for she and Prince Alexis had gone for a lengthened tour in the South of Europe, and I hoped and believed she was happy, for her frequent letters were as gay and sprightly as her own cheerful self.

Our journey was a long one, but the weeks on board the steamboats that navigate the Volga are delightful. This great and majestic river traverses an immense extent of country. Sometimes the banks are steep and wooded, gay with many-coloured weeds, or decked with shrubs and trees, whose waving branches are beautiful in every shade of tender green; then again the rapid current widens, and its now slow and sluggish waves roll through a vast expanse of flat marshy land. In the bright sunshine the great river frequently looks like a stream of

molten silver, sparkling with diamonds, as the shoals of fish with which its waters teem, rise and fall on its shining surface.

The songs of nightingales, the chimes of monasteries and village churches blend musically with the tender minor melodies sung by the boatmen as they ply their oars, or let their great rafts float with the current on their way to many a distant town. But the farther we progress, the more flat and uninteresting does the country become, and how dismal was the aspect of the town in which we were to find a home! Though a place of some importance, with a population of many thousand inhabitants, it appeared a mere heap of wretched houses, cast down accidentally in the midst of a vast, barren, and marshy plain. Here and there are a few thickets of scrubby fir or birch trees, but the prevailing characteristic of the dreary view is caused by the numerous swampy ponds with which the district is studded. In the summer these ponds have a certain beauty, from the masses of lovely water-lilies with which they are covered, but few dare approach too near, so cruel are the assaults of the myriads of bloodthirsty mosquitoes that rise in clouds from the muddy banks.

But the shock caused by the aspect of the town was as nothing compared to that I experienced on entering the house that was to be our home. As a house it was not bad, of one storey, solidly built, with large and rather lofty rooms. The windows also were large, though they admitted but little light, so thickly were they covered with mud and dust. But the atmosphere! How it reeked of garlic, kevass, and stale tobacco! For a few seconds I was staggered, but seeing my kind husband's eyes fixed anxiously upon me, I regained courage, and speedily became hopeful and happy, cheered by the reflection that mud can be washed and dust brushed away. Later on, however, what battles did I not have with Anitscka about the mud and dust, and those evil smells! She was so neat and clean herself; her chemise, with its puffed sleeves, was so white, her red bodice and embroidered petticoat were so pretty and trim, that I found it difficult to understand her contented endurance of dirty and untidy surroundings. Nothing would persuade her that a few sprinklings of dirty water over floors and walls were not fully sufficient for all purposes of cleanliness, and she would willingly have made the kitchen the home of all the animals we possessed. However, patience and perseverance, aided by a few kopecks and innumerable cups of tea, produced a certain amount of improvement;

but Russian and English ideas of cleanliness are widely apart, and it is well-nigh impossible to make them assimilate.

One great, indeed insurmountable difficulty is the dust. None but those who have seen it, breathed it, and felt it, would believe in the dust of a Russian village or little town. It has no equal in the world save in the winter's mud of the same village. In the summer we look upon our ill-kept street through a haze of golden mist, golden enough when the sun's rays stream through it, but which leaves a coating of grey powder upon furniture, floors, hair, face, and hands. In the winter this dust is converted into a mass of liquid mud, black, sticky, and tenacious, in which pigs wallow to their hearts' content, and with which every passing vehicle so bespatters walls and houses that their original colour becomes indiscernible. The back of our house opens upon a piece of waste ground overgrown with weeds, save where they have been beaten down by mounds of dirt, broken crockery and other refuse ; but here also a few kopecks and liberal use of tea speedily brought improvement.

The lower classes in Russia, especially the servants, are delightfully good-natured. They are also for the most part very intelligent, though unhappily their cleverness not unfrequently degenerates into cunning ; nevertheless their idleness, their carelessness, their reckless indifference to truth, make them both difficult and trying to deal with. One is so delighted at first with their good temper, and willingness to oblige. It is such a pleasure to look into their beaming faces and hear their ready assent to every proposition, but unluckily nine times out of ten, their readiness stops with their assent. You are so pleased with them, and they are so pleased with themselves that they do no more.

They are satisfied, though you are not.

I am ashamed to acknowledge how often I have felt that a few blows would have solaced my irritated feelings, and I had often also the additional mortification of perceiving that they not only expected these blows, but even despised me for not inflicting them.

Poor as is the general aspect of our town, before the Governor's residence there is a broad boulevard planted with trees, and though it is dusty and ill-kept, here the *beau-monde* assembles to enjoy the evening air and listen to the excellent music of military bands. But pass out of this boulevard and the squalor of the neighbouring streets is almost inconceivable. The houses, or rather hovels, have tumbled out of all shape from sheer decrepitude. The rotting planks, the rotting roofs, have settled into

horribly grotesque forms ; in many instances the walls apparently being only supported or held together by old barrels, odd bits of iron, heaps of earthenware, or even by the mounds of refuse heaped around them. Need it be said that the atmosphere in and about such dwellings is horrible in the extreme. The gusts of hot, tainted air that come from many of the open doorways are absolutely sickening. But Russian *moujiks*, and especially Russian Jews, appear impervious to bad smells, otherwise the really fœtid atmosphere in which many of them pass their lives would kill them as certainly as a visitation of typhus or cholera, were they susceptible to such influences. Some of the worst portions of the town are inhabited by Jews, who, though content to abide in these wretched dwellings, are said to be possessed of considerable wealth.

The tumultuous stream of human life that is for ever seething in and through these streets fills a stranger with wonder. More wonderful still is it to see how handsome and well-grown are the people that issue from the loathsome dens. An old Jewess is not a pretty sight, old age comes to them in most cases with repulsive ugliness, but many of the young women, and especially the girls, are startlingly beautiful. Amidst the masses of dirty, half-naked children that are swarming in the gutters, from beneath almost a roofing of shaggy, unkempt hair may look forth faces as pure and beautiful in outline as those of the typical angel, although the delicate features are probably soiled and darkened by the dirt that has been upon them for unnumbered days—dirt producing eventually grievous and dangerous diseases.

I had much to do, I was happy, but it must be confessed that after the brilliant and intelligent society in Moscow, with which I had become in some degree acquainted, I found that of our little town uninteresting. Etiquette was rigid, and conversation was vapid. Very few of the ladies cared to read, or possessed interest in anything beyond the daily events of their daily life. Nevertheless, after a time I began to wish that my dear young Princess's views and objects were equally narrow. It is dangerous for a woman to be either more clever, or to have larger purposes in life than those amongst whom that life has to be passed. Such pre-eminence rarely fails to bring trouble both to the possessor, and to those whom she desires to benefit. And thus I feared it would be with my dear pupil. The tone of her letters changed. It was evident that she was troubled about many things, and

by degrees her expressions caused me much and serious anxiety. She had returned to Russia, and appeared to be passing both days and nights in one continued round of excitement and gaiety. But such a life of uninterrupted frivolity could not, I was assured, satisfy one of her earnest temperament; I could not be surprised that she was neither happy nor satisfied, but I much feared she was allowing herself to be drawn into intimacy with people, whose mere acquaintance must be fraught with peril to one so continually before the world, so high in place as the Princess Ariane Karàsoumoff.

Then suddenly sorrow came to the great and hitherto prosperous family. The Prince was one night brought home dead from one of his most joyous orgies. Apoplexy struck him down even at the moment when he was raising his glass to drink to the health of the bright-eyed Bohemian who was his latest passion. As immovably as she had ever received his visits in life, so immovably did the Princess receive the intelligence of his death. Every detail of magnificent interment and mourning that old custom or new fashion could require was rigidly conformed to, the Princess apparently as calmly cold as ever, but from that moment she drooped. Ere long a formidable malady declared itself. She repaired to Paris, accompanied by her son and his wife, in order to place herself in the hands of the celebrated surgeons of that city. I know not what advice they gave, but she insisted upon an operation being attempted, and beneath that operation she died, with the same calm dignity that had been the characteristic feature of her later years.

Thus even the slight check or influence possessed by the heads of the family was lost to the poor young Princess, and while little more than a child, she was left to the guidance of her own warm heart, but alas! ill-regulated judgment. Her husband was undoubtedly clever, he was also rich and powerful. The period was one of considerable anxiety, for clouds more heavy and threatening than usual were arising on the political horizon. Revolutionary activity was rife in many quarters. Dangerous mutterings of an import that could not pass unnoticed were making themselves heard.

The Prince was made Governor of an important and disturbed district. Whether the measures he adopted were right or wrong, I am not competent to say. That they were both stern and severe, cannot be denied. The tender heart of the young Princess was tortured by the scenes she witnessed, by the sufferings

she had no power to assuage. She soon discovered that what little influence she may have once possessed had departed. Then fierce anger filled her soul, and she threw herself with her usual energy into the cause of those whom she considered both unjustly and cruelly treated. More and more alarming became her letters. More and more alarming also became the reports respecting her that from time to time reached us. My selfish love for her made me perhaps callous to other duties, but earnestly, even passionately, I wrote to her. I entreated her to be cautious. I besought her to have nought to do with those, who, however righteous their cause, were considered the enemies of her country, and who, however noble their object, were doing wrong to attain it. Her last letter to me contained a strong, indeed angry rebuke for the cruel cowardice of my advice ; but the words of anger were followed by so many of tender love, that my tears flowed fast as I read them, and I kissed the paper her dear hand had rested on, though I little dreamed that never again would that hand trace lines to me.

Then a hideous event occurred, one that horrified and well-nigh paralysed the whole of the civilized world. The mighty Czar, the all-powerful Emperor, was slain with savage barbarity by his own people, in his own capital, at the door of his own palace. Men of all countries, of all creeds, were aghast at the cruel deed, as barbarous as it was useless. All Russia was convulsed by the awful shock, but speedily did the horror-stricken Russians demand revenge, for now no man's life was safe, none knew who might not be the next victim.

Alas ! but little enquiry was necessary to make it evident that the gangrene of stealthy and murderous conspiracy had taken deep root in every class. Nobles, merchants, soldiers, priests, moujiks, rich and poor, young and old, women as well as men had enrolled themselves in secret societies, sworn to destroy and even slay whoever held the reins of power. Wholesale, inhuman and cowardly murder was to be committed, and under the guise of patriotism the land was to be deluged in blood. Many of the instigators of this hideous outrage were traced to the province over which Prince Karàsoumoff was Governor.

The Almighty alone knows in what degree the miserable wretches accused were guilty, but in such a case Prince Alexis was not one to spare, and terrible indeed were the reprisals. The savage murder was followed by the savage sacrifice of a perfect holocaust of victims.

My poor Princess ! that she suffered fearfully I am convinced, but this I never learnt, for soon after these dreadful days she disappeared.

Yes—disappeared !

How or where she went no one would or could inform me ; but one day she had gone, leaving no trace behind.

There had been neither charge, nor definite accusation, but the suspicion of political untrustworthiness had fallen upon her, of all crimes the most perilous, so intangible and impalpable is it, from the wide and arbitrary definitions that may be attached to it.

Those so charged are seldom informed of their crime. They are suspected, and they are removed. Some no doubt may be able to produce convincing proofs of their loyalty, but for the most part the fate of those thus arrested is shrouded in a dark, inscrutable and impenetrable veil of mystery.

Russia is very dear to me. I infinitely love the Russians, but this one awful blot, which stains the justice of the country, produces a terror and a repugnance that renders most of their good and noble qualities absolutely nugatory.

When we learnt the disappearance of my beloved Princess, we learnt at the same time that she had been supplanted in some degree by my quondam companion, Mademoiselle Blossé. How one so plain and uninteresting could have obtained any power over the heart of such a man as Prince Alexis appears impossible, but the history of the world shows that the preponderating passion in such men is vanity, and no doubt it was by playing up to this weakness that the Frenchwoman had gained her influence. When I learnt this, my heart sank. I well knew how little hope remained, for next to her love for the Prince was the strength of envy, almost hatred this woman felt for her beautiful pupil. There are some women to whom the beauty of another appears a positive insult, and occasionally produces such hatred that it leads to vitriol throwing, and other efforts to destroy the good looks of which they are so envious.

Letter after letter did I send. None were answered, the silence was impenetrable. In my despair I ventured to write to Prince Karásoumoff himself. To this letter the Prince's secretary replied by a few civil words. I was thanked for my enquiries ; the Princess was suffering, her mind had been slightly affected, but she was under skilful treatment, and would probably soon be restored to health. Perfect quiet, however, was for the present absolutely necessary, and she could see no one. Such was the

answer I received ; but we soon learnt that my presumption was not to pass unnoticed. Ere many weeks had passed my husband was unexpectedly transferred to another post, in a remote part of Siberia.

Then how I reproached myself that my too great love for my dear pupil had led me to forget my kind husband ! I had forgotten the mighty power of interest in this vast country. My husband himself, however, was, or affected to be, delighted. He knew Siberia and liked it. The military advancement and also the importance of the post confided to him were very gratifying.

But oh ! the journey. It was alarming to think of, and a trial to endure. As long as we could take advantage of railways and steamers, it was pleasant enough, but all the latter part of the way in the "Tarantass," or cart-carriage that is universally employed, was painfully trying. As we approached the north it became necessary to travel day and night, distances between halting-places being very great. Some of the posting-houses had tidy rooms and pretty gardens, others were too filthily dirty. Sometimes the floor on which we had to sleep was slippery from mud and dirt, and the rats peeped out from holes ready to hold their carnival over our recumbent bodies, while the evil smells engendered by neglect of all sanitary laws were infinitely increased by the crowd of moujiks who thronged the place, their only half-cleansed, greasy sheep-skin garments, and the dirty cloths in which their legs were wrapped, emitting most revolting odours. It is difficult to understand how human beings can endure such noisome smells, or calmly support the swarms of vermin that infest their garments. However, even long journeys have an end, and at length we arrived safely at our destination.

How much has been written about Siberia, and yet how little is it known ! Still people are now aware that this immense country is not all ice, snow, and darkness, that in its vast area it can boast of scenery of every description. The mountains, the forests, the rivers of Siberia have a grandeur all their own, but their riches and their varied beauties have for centuries been ignored by the majority of the civilized world. Society also in the large towns is exceptionally agreeable, and the wealth displayed in many of the great houses is quite startling. Every luxury the heart of man can desire is found in abundance, and if I may presume to say so, in too great abundance. It is enervating and tends to recklessness.

The plague-spot, however, that darkens the land, the black

drop that embitters personal enjoyment, is the fact that Siberia is a place of punishment. Under existing conditions, real prosperity is well-nigh impossible. Perhaps it is a wholesome lesson to have the sufferings of others brought vividly before one, but if wholesome, it is assuredly most painful. The daily sight of so many miserable and degraded wretches, and the impossibility of aiding them, is a pain as great to-day as it was at the first hour of arrival. Never shall I forget the shock of seeing a gang of convicts on their march.

Soon after my arrival at Y—— we were driving over the steppe, the beautiful illimitable steppe, at this season of the year enamelled with flowers, and fresh with air so pure and vivifying, that the fact of breathing it is like drinking in life. Here, so far towards the extreme north, there is literally no spring. Sunshine and summer arrive together. The earth suddenly awaking from her long sleep, quickly throws off her snowy winter's coverlet, and arises blushing, and perfumed in the flush of renewed youth, and ere many days have passed has decked herself with the myriad flowers that have been cherished in her broad bosom through the long and chilly months. The sun darts his beams into every corner and nook, each ray bringing new beauties into light. The merry summer wind seems laughing as it dances over waving trees and sparkling waters, rustling across vast plains, where it whispers tenderly to the waving grasses that for thousands of miles hail his approach with rapture. The voices of the birds, the voices of the streams as they dash away the ice beneath which they have so long been bound, the murmurs of the wind, are all singing the great hymn of thanksgiving that for centuries Nature sends upwards into the blue vault of the listening Heaven above. Joy, peace, and happiness seem resting upon the earth, when, see, in the far distance a black line is darkening a portion of the horizon. It draws nearer, and the blackness revolves itself into a long train of human beings, intermixed with carts and horsemen.

Presently a wild sorrowful song is borne to us by the wind ; so wild and mournful are the tones, that they awe one into fear, so certainly are they the wail of suffering humanity. The band draws near, and our carriage stops. The coachman takes off his hat, no true Russian would ever fail to give this tribute of sympathy to a gang of "unfortunates" as they pass to their place of punishment.

Now the singing ceases, and nought is heard but the trampling

of men and horses, the rumble of shaking cart-wheels, and—the clanking of chains as the miserable wretches who bear them drag onwards in weary slowness. No sooner does the carriage stop than the convicts nearest to us bare their hideous half-shaven heads, and holding out their caps with obsequious reverence, and in fawning, lamentable tones, beseech our alms in the name of God.

The squalor, the dirt, the scarred faces, the abject misery, the nauseous odours proceeding from the clothes and the unwashed persons of these unhappy ones, combined with the horrible sound of the clanking chains, were sickening beyond description. No long halt, however, can be permitted. Soon is the signal given, whips are cracked, and the dreadful band, with loud cries of thanks and blessings, moves on with more alacrity than before, for now, at the next *ostrog*, or halting-place, they have wherewithal to procure those greatest of luxuries to prisoners, vodka, tobacco, and white bread.

The band numbered several hundred, and truly such a crowd of loathsome wretches was a terrible and revolting sight, but still more piteous was it to see the women with whom the telegas that followed were filled. Haggard and travel-stained, many with infants at their breast, several no doubt innocent of crime, and but following their husbands into exile, no human heart could withstand the mute appeal their dim and suffering eyes expressed. During many an hour of troubled sleep have those hopeless and weary eyes haunted me.

It must, however, be borne in mind that the criminal convicts are not as a class to be pitied. Relatively to the crimes committed the punishments are not severe, and in no other country in the world do the conditions of a released prisoner tend so usefully to his reform, and to his subsequent rehabilitation as a citizen and useful colonist. The hopelessly depraved of course remain in their mire, but those who desire to amend have many chances accorded to them. The terms of imprisonment are seldom long, even life-sentences may be shortened by good conduct, and then instead of the prisoner being cast adrift upon the world, to return probably to his degraded home, and to renewed association with the scene and companions of his crime, he is given a piece of land, and the money he has earned in prison. Other assistance, such as helping to build a house, is frequently given by the Government; thus the prisoner becomes a colonist, free in most respects, save that he is unable to leave the country

and for some years remains to a certain extent under police supervision.

Many Russians thoroughly conversant with the criminal laws of other lands are persuaded that the Russian system is preferable to long terms of imprisonment, especially when these terms are accompanied by the preliminary period of solitary confinement enforced in England. To those accustomed to live and labour in the open air such rigid isolation inflicts unendurable suffering, and almost any amount of bodily chastisement is more humane than causing mental agonies that result in destruction of the intellect.

These little observations are ventured upon solely with regard to the ordinary class of criminal convicts. I cannot presume to say much respecting the political prisoners. They have my deepest sympathy, not indeed with their cause, scarcely even with their punishment, but on account of the injustice with which these punishments are inflicted.

My sturdy English nature rebels against the secrecy, and consequently against the cruel mockery of justice with which these prisoners are so frequently condemned unheard. The liberty that Russians really need is open, even-handed justice, and no privileges will be of any avail until this first necessity of civilized humanity be accorded to them. Liberty of the press, respecting which so much is said, liberty of speaking, liberty in the practice of professions is as nothing compared to the simple concession each man is entitled to claim of his fellow-men, namely that his cause shall be heard publicly, and that facts alone shall weigh for or against him, irrespective of any influence of money or interested power.

Siberia has been to me for many years a happy home; the pleasure of society there being much enhanced by intercourse with the exiles, very many of whom are persons of culture, position and learning. One cannot doubt that their sorrows and their sufferings have been, alas! too often are, very great; but a good and just Governor can do much to alleviate the hardships of their condition, and I have the joy of knowing that my husband has been foremost amongst those who have thus striven to bring light into their darkness.

Happily the mind soon becomes reconciled to the habits engendered by living in these northern regions, and pleasures are by degrees discovered in that which may be repugnant. For some years the long winters were trying, but the clear air

is favourable to cheerfulness, and the snow, far from being dreary, is both beautiful and brilliant.

But it must be admitted there is another and a reverse side to the picture. There are regions where man shrinks appalled from the stern desolation, and the solemn evidences of the mighty and unmerciful power of Nature. A nature dark and unfathomable, enwrapping awful secrets in her ice-bound bosom, where night broods in terrific gloom, the death-silence alone broken by the roar of falling icebergs, or the rush of the mighty storm. And such darkness lasts for months, no ray of light piercing the dread gloom, save when the shimmering coruscations of the wondrous Auroras cast a weird glare over the mysterious sight of a world fast bound in an eternal tomb.

Man cannot intrude here long and live. In the far North, Nature, who in more genial climes is a sweet and beneficent mother, has become an awful and inscrutable tyrant, crushing and destroying whatever speaks of or tends to life. In vain man fights and struggles. Surely, steadily, hopelessly, do frost and ice gather around him, and even in death does the North retain her victim, never does she relinquish her grasp. Life is taken, but its wasted shell remains, to be for unnumbered ages a dread memorial of the hopeless and impotent conflict.

My husband's duties obliged him at various times to visit these remote districts. This summer I was to accompany him, hitherto he had refused to allow me to do so. The weather was delightful, and long ere this I had become accustomed to the break-neck speed with which drivers send their hardy little native horses over tracks that in many places are a mere succession of holes, quagmires and rough stones. Sometimes the deep ravines into which we so rapidly descend, and the tremendous precipices that skirt the way, are not a little nerve-shaking; however accidents rarely happen.

And how bright is the sunshine, how pure and blue the sky, how soft the air that is so freshened by the many streams, whose waters and whose vivifying spray are bringing great banks of flowers into life! Earth and air alike seem perfumed. From the birch woods that clothe the sides of these deep valleys comes a strange sweet fragrance that mingles deliciously with the resinous scent of the pines that cover the higher ranges of hills, while every grassy slope is fairly carpeted with flowers, whose brilliant colouring gains in vividness of tint from the deep purple shadows of the clouds that are hanging about the mountain

peaks. What music also can be sweeter than that made by the waterfalls that are tumbling in lines of glittering foam from these half-hidden summits !

But by and by such soft beauties diminish, and finally disappear as we advance towards the north. Vast and gloomy forests stretch before and around us for thousands of versts. Here and there are tiny clearings belonging to a few lonely huts inhabited by hunters, mostly political exiles, who gain a scanty subsistence by trapping the ermines and blue foxes, whose skins are sold to the traders who visit these districts every year. But gloomy as are these forests, they are cheerful compared to the savage desolation of the land as we advance towards the dread ice-regions. The mountains are now seamed by formidable glaciers, where dark and yawning fissures, and huge rocks, half veiled in rolling vapour, make scenes of wild and startling grandeur. Especially awe-inspiring also are the gaunt cliffs where they rise in black and sullen majesty above the white world of the great snow-fields, of which we can see the horizon-bounded fields extending far towards the north.

But even here vegetation has not ceased, the sun is still struggling to maintain his power, and in sheltered nooks tiny northern flowers may be seen peeping forth amidst the stones and ice, whilst here and there stretches of the succulent moss so loved by reindeer soften in some measure the stern harshness of this northern land. Nevertheless, rugged and lonely as it is, we come from time to time upon straggling villages, where life still seems pleasant to their inhabitants, for there are neat post-houses, and attempts at gardens. Many windows also are actually gay with pots of flowers, but, alas ! close by is the guarded *ostrog*, showing that prisoners are here on their way to still more distant and savage regions. These *ostrogs* make the heart ache, so horrible are they in every respect. The lower order of Russians no doubt love dirt, they find it warm, and probably therefore comforting, but in these temporary prisons not only is dirt rampant, but, from the habitual over-crowding caused by want of space, every sanitary law is violated, and the result is frightful beyond description.

Into some of the worst of these places I was not permitted to penetrate. Even in those I entered the air was polluted to a degree that was indescribably dreadful. Carbolic acid is used in large quantities, but the very walls and floorings are now so permeated by poisonous gases, that not only the atmosphere, but the buildings themselves have become pestilential.

The journey was long, the duties many, the delays therefore frequent, so the season was advancing ere we had arrived at our destination, a large and famous convent as far north as it was possible for human beings to endure the rigour of the Arctic climate. And those who did so endure were women, many nobly born and gently nurtured; nevertheless, they had voluntarily embraced a religious life, where their privations, their duties and sufferings must make existence one stern and never-ending penance. This convent is celebrated throughout the land, not only that its inmates are much venerated, for they are as charitable to others as they are austere towards themselves, but the chapel is a marvel of magnificence, and many are the health-giving miracles attributed to the various shrines. Bands of pilgrims therefore resort here during the few weeks that the convent is accessible, for during the greater portion of the year, snow, ice and floods cut off communication with the outer world.

The short summer of the Polar regions was already on its wane, and the days were shortening rapidly as we drew near this desolate spot. From afar, the gloomy mass of buildings could be perceived standing near the extremity of a dark and narrow valley; on either side were low hills, now partially covered with the grey reindeer-moss, but soon to be again buried beneath winter's snow. Beyond these hills rose lofty granite cliffs, their sides scored by glaciers, and many of their summits covered with glittering ice. In the farther distance appeared the shimmering blink that marks the region of eternal snow.

As we approached them, more and more dismal did the dark walls appear. No gate stood hospitably open to invite the weary traveller to enter for rest and prayer; for this convent is a fortress and a prison, as well as a religious house. The brilliant dome and glittering cross of the great church were caught by some rays of the now declining sun, but these spots of light but added to the gloom that was gathering round the other and less lofty buildings. Most if not all the pilgrims had probably departed, for all was quiet, all was silent in and about the place.

So absolute was the quiet, that it gave the impression that we were drawing near the abode of death; however, our arrival had doubtless been observed, for the great gates opened ere we could make a summons. The intervening space between the outer walls and the main building was neatly cultivated as a garden, but few and stunted were the vegetables that could be prevailed upon to grow in such ungenial climate in such ungenial soil.

Before us was a small door, which, opening as noiselessly as the gates, gave admittance into a narrow passage, in which stood a tall black figure, straight and rigid as the walls beside her. A serge veil not only covered her coarse black robe, but was so drawn over head and face that it was impossible to see more than the dim outline of a face. Nought of white could be perceived save the well-nigh fleshless fingers that held a bunch of keys. In silence she led us into the presence of the Superior, a kindly, well-bred woman, who we could well believe had in her worldly days been a frequenter of Courts. It seems marvellous that one habituated to the comforts and luxuries of palaces should voluntarily embrace a life of such severe asceticism ; but the head of this house possesses considerable power, besides the control of an immense income, and there are minds so constituted that the possession of power recompenses them for incredible personal privations. Some women doubtless come here to expiate sins committed during years of a worldly, perchance even sinful life, but the good Superior did not appear one of these remorseful Magdalens. Speedily we were supplied with a good and comfortable meal, and shown the rooms, or rather cells assigned to our use. Ere long the bell sounded for the evening office, and we descended to the chapel. Most impressive was the sight, and deeply touching the service. But few lamps illuminated the great chapel, but their star-like light was caught and reflected by the superb jewels that decked every shrine, for the revenues of a kingdom have been lavished on this lonely spot. Weird and spectral was it to see the long line of black-robed figures as they slowly entered, and prostrating themselves humbly before the altar, their motionless forms became absorbed in the deep gloom around. Infinitely tender were the voices that chanted the service, the quivering plaintive tones having lost all trace of earthly joy, dead as they were to all the world holds dear. Fainter and weaker they became, until at last they seemed to float away in the clouds of incense that were rolling around, filling the air with a weight of sweetness until the brain became dimmed to all other objects.

Perhaps this mournful service affected the nerves ; perhaps the long journey, the narrow cell, the bare walls, the hardness of the conventual bed strained too much the already tired frame, but, agitated and restless, I could not sleep. I could but listen to the weird cries of the wind, that was sighing in fitful gusts, moaning and sobbing like a soul in pain, as it rose and fell in

long melancholy wails, amidst the stern rocks and death-like valleys that stretched around us. At length sleep must have come, but it brought no solace to my troubled and harassed mind. A cruel dream came instead.

Thoughts of my dear young Princess, dead now so many years that even her dear memory was no longer hourly in my remembrance, came back to me with startling vividness. I saw her in all her fresh young beauty on her wedding-day, but as she drove away in her stately carriage, I perceived that she was being taken to no happy earthly home, but to the snow-regions of the deadly north. Vainly I strove to call to her, to warn her of her peril. My paralysed tongue clove to my mouth. No sound could I utter. I struggled to pursue her, to rescue her from the fatal journey. Cruel hands held me back, I was motionless as well as speechless.

Then again I saw her, but now in rags and dirt, suffering, beaten, bruised, one amongst those prisoners of despair on their way to their places of punishment. Now, she has fallen, sinking down dying in the snow, for a whip is raised to strike the beauteous, shrinking form.

In my agony to aid, to save her, I start up, and then surely, yes surely, there comes to my ears a little song, of which the melody and the touching words had long ago seized her girlish fancy.

"I sigh for Jenny, with the light brown hair!"

Yes, there it was, "I sigh for Jenny—for Jenny!"

I was now awake, wide awake, sitting up in bed, straining with searching, yearning gaze, great beads of perspiration standing on my brow; but I was on no snowfield, still on the little convent bed, all quiet and silent around, save for the sobbing wail of the wind, as it rose and fell in moaning, fitful murmurs.

I sank back, fairly overcome. Tears rained from my eyes. Where was my poor darling now? Not in life, surely not in life, kind death must long ere this have ended her cruel pains. Then a foolish hope, or was it a fear? came to me. Could she be here? All the menial work and hard labour of this great house was done by female prisoners, the majority political convicts. This convent was their prison, their house of correction, and degrading and terrible as such duties must be to nobly born and perchance highly cultured women, yet it was better than being sent as hired servants, or rather slaves, to the public factories, or to private houses. But though without any thought of finding her I loved

amongst them, I knew my wandering eyes had scanned every face of these unhappy women, and amongst the crowd of hopeless miserable creatures there was not one I had ever seen before. To-day I would, however, search again, and still more carefully, though I felt convinced my darling would have recognized me, even if I had failed to recognize her in her prison dress.

I carried out my intentions.

In the chapel, in the refectory, in all the offices there was not one woman into whose face I did not look enquiringly, searchingly. Every nook, every corner did I visit. The cells of the nuns themselves are sacred, but I was assured that all the sisters were in various portions of the convent, that I had seen them all, and that these cells were therefore empty.

There was a kindness and a simplicity about the nun who was my conductress that was very attractive. I could not doubt her, there was no desire to conceal anything ; but as I was leaving one of the galleries into which the dormitories opened, suddenly there was a sharp weak cry that subsided into feeble sobs, and amidst these sobs I could hear words, English words.

Oh—just Heaven! Strange and unearthly as was the voice, I could distinguish—

“ I sigh for Jenny,
And my heart beats low.”

I heard no more. I flew back to the door whence the sounds proceeded.

“ Open,” I said authoritatively.

The nun stared at me inquisitively, and hesitated a little, though there was no effort at concealment.

“ Her Excellency will not care to enter here. There is only a poor imbecile who knows no one—a grievous case, very sad to see.”

I was speechless with choking agony. In another instant I was within the cell beside the bed.

Oh! dear Heaven, could this be her? My beauteous Princess, my fairy happy pupil! This old faded woman, whose grey locks hung in miserable disorder over yellow and shrunken cheeks. The wizened hands were clawing at the bed-coverings, while in vague, disjointed accents she was crooning to herself, sometimes breaking into a wild cry, that again sunk into trembling sobs.

As I fell on my knees beside her, her eyes opened, and turned full upon me. The skin around was puckered and drawn, but

the glorious blue of those once beautiful orbs was still there, though, alas! no sign of recognition was in them. But ever and again came the piteous wail, and the trembling lips went on with the little song, though there was no understanding that she they called upon was near. I rained kisses upon that poor, scarred and altered face; I clasped her hands, and pressed them to my heart in hopeless, unutterable love. Those little hands, once so white and perfect in their young, fresh beauty, now hardened and horny from severe and cruel toil.

The good nun looked on in piteous sympathy.

"Her Excellency knows this poor creature?"

"Yes, yes," I sobbed. "I know her and love her well. Has she been long like this?"

"Only of late years. Not so when she first came, though always very sorrowful. But the work and life were too hard for one who had been, it was said, a very great lady, and then orders came that she was dangerous, and was to be kept '*au secret*,' and that made the poor brain go. But we have done what we could, and I think we have made her happy as far as was possible. Now her time for departure is very near. The Holy Mother is about to take her to herself."

It was so. The day of departure was at hand, nay the very hour was drawing near, for already convulsions were shaking the exhausted frame.

She knew me not, but on my bosom should that frail life depart.

I sent to my husband, and heard from him that we might remain until the end. Yes, even until the end, for it could not be far off. Many came to help and pity, but I wanted neither help nor pity. I alone would hold her. My straining eyes alone should watch the kindly death-shadow fall upon the clay that now was scarce the likeness even of her I loved. I think she felt content when my arms encircled her. Even during the strong spasms that from time to time racked the dying frame, I think she knew that one who loved her was near, but ere long these terrible fits ceased. Then came lethargy, and for some hours nought was heard save the choking breath of the sufferer. Still even in these last moments ever and anon were slowly faltered the pathetic words—

"I pine for Jenny."

God alone knows how my soul was torn and distracted as I

heard this faint and piteous appeal, and looked upon the wreck made by man's gross selfishness and cruelty! May He forgive the wild longing for revenge that came over me as I looked upon the ruin, the scarred and soulless ruin of the once fair and brilliant creature, whose promising young life had been thus ruthlessly done to death.

Ere night fell, the struggle was nearly at an end.

The gasping breaths came slower and slower; at length the dear head fell back with one sharp, quick, convulsive effort. Then some one laid her back upon the narrow bed, and drew a covering up over the livid face.

It was just before the midnight mass that we carried her into the chapel, and clothed in the rough black robe and coarse garments of the order, laid her at the foot of the great altar.

When the coming day should dawn she would be placed in a nameless grave, and none would ever know that the poor toil-worn servant of the convent had once been the beautiful, wealthy and powerful Princess Ariane Karàsoumoff. The kind ones around let me remain until the last minute. I know not when that was, for a merciful unconsciousness was then easing my aching heart.

When the early dawn was tinging the stern rocks and mountains with its faint and pallid light, we had already left the convent, and as we travelled onwards, the sighing wind bore from time to time to our ears the solemn quivering toll of the chapel bell, saying that one within those walls was being laid in her last and most dreary resting-place.

* * * * *

It is the middle of August, and the heat is intense, intense even to those accustomed to the trying oppression of a Russian summer. The sun has for hours been streaming garishly over the treeless fields and heated plains, and now the very air itself seems exhausted, so overpowering is the glaring brilliancy of the scorching and pitiless sunshine. Save for the drowsy hum of innumerable insects, all living things are drooping in so fiery an atmosphere, withering beneath a heat that absolutely pulverises the earth and all upon it. Nevertheless, regardless of personal suffering, regardless even of danger, a group of peasants have assembled in the great courtyard of the Karàsoumoff villa. With streaming eyes and entreating gestures, they are imploring admittance to the presence of their Lord.

The Dvornik is compassionate. Many of the petitioners are his relatives, he looks upon them with pitying eyes.

"Go, go!" he says, "it is of no use, he will not see you." But the old man at the head of the group will not be repulsed, he clasps his hands, tears stream from his eyes, as he sobs,

"Nay, nay, Ivan Ivanovitch, in the name of God make him see us. He is our Lord, he is our Father; he cannot deny us, he must have mercy."

The wretched people press round the porter. They try to clutch his coat. He repulses them, and this time somewhat roughly; but some are still clinging to him as the great door at the end of the court opens, and a gentleman appears.

Tall, handsome, and eminently distinguished in appearance, there is something in the almost feminine delicacy and beauty of his features that might inspire confidence and even love at first sight, but for the calm, cold glitter of the singularly pale-blue eyes. Eyes that have the cruel calmness of a snake. Eyes that fascinate while they terrify in their gaze of passionless cruelty.

"Dog!" he says, as he strikes the porter sharply with his stick, "how darest thou let these curs come here? How darest thou let them trouble me? Here take these fellows," he continues, pointing to the porter and to the old man, and turning to some servants who have followed, "and let them have twenty strokes of the rods apiece."

The trembling wretches, without any attempt at remonstrance or resistance, allow themselves to be led away, and in a few minutes their cries are heard resounding through the air as their punishment is being administered. Notwithstanding this cruel answer to the prayers they are about to make, the women (and the petitioners are mostly women) will not be repulsed. With sobs and tears, and choking utterances, they appeal for mercy. Wives and mothers grovel on the ground, beating their breasts in the anguish of their entreaties.

"My little Nadja," sobs one unhappy mother, "think, dear, gracious Lord, how young she is! but a child, still but a little child! You cannot, no you cannot let her . . ." but a very convulsion of grief prevents her saying more.

It is said that a savage beast may perchance show mercy. A madman has even been softened by the sight of a woman's tears, but the hardened selfish heart of man glories in its ruthless power. Unmoved, the Prince (for this is the mighty Governor

of the Province) looks upon the miserable crowd. Coolly he scans each upturned face. Then his eyes rest upon that of Nadja's mother, and they quiver with a sharp and snake-like glitter as they grow harder and more merciless. A mocking smile curls his lip.

"Your little Nadja is very young? She is dear to you? She is your only one?"

"Yes, yes, dear Lord, she is very young, my only one, my little darling!" moans the mother, though a shadow of hope is gathering in her tones as she speaks.

"Good," says the Prince, "then in her I crush the last of a viper's brood. Go," he continues, turning to a Cossack who, booted and spurred, is awaiting his pleasure. "Mount and be off. You have the orders. Do not draw rein until you have delivered them at the prison."

Then to the trembling wretches before him. "Begone, vile scum!" he cries, "you have your answer. Go and see your traitorous spawn strung up by the hangman's hands, and look upon their flesh ere the crows can seize their portion."

Without vouchsafing another glance, he turns upon his heel, and no sooner is he gone, than the miserable creatures who have flocked hither to implore his mercy, are driven with blows through the court-yard, and then beyond the gates.

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Hope has been destroyed, but vengeance is arising from its ashes. Tears no longer moisten eyes grown bright and savage in the keen ardour for revenge,

Towards evening, however, calm seems restored. Men again lead their horses from the stables, women resume their work in the steaming fields. To all appearance life in that village is the same as it was yesterday, and had been for many previous days, but, unobserved, messengers have been stealing away to other villages in the same district or *mir*, as it is called. Watchwords have passed. Signals have been made, and without apparent outward movement, a terrible convulsion, a menacing upheaval of the masses, is rapidly approaching.

The great heat of the day as night falls culminates in a storm. The roar of the thunder is deafening. It well-nigh drowns the groans of old Yartisch, who is lying upon his face in his wretched cabin, his bruised and suffering back covered with wet rags. After applying this remedy, no one takes more trouble about him. Most of the men present have experienced the

suffering, and know that patience and cold water are the only remedies.

The men and women assembled to-night in this hut are peasants. Peasants who have long been humble, deferential, forbearing; but a time arrives when the most humble, the most enduring, will bear no more, when they will no longer bow beneath the burden laid upon them.

That moment has come, and though but few words are spoken, those few are uttered with the savage accents of human beings, in whose hearts the passions of angry beasts are arising. The savage thirst of vengeance has now seized them, a thirst that can only be assuaged by blood. Strong, however, as is that craving, furious as is the passionate longing for revenge, irresolution is apparent on every countenance. Not a man will take the lead. Not a man has aught definite to propose. With muttered curses the meeting to-night might have dispersed, all decisive measures vaguely deferred, had not the door been pushed open by Marfa, who enters hurriedly, followed by an aged man. It is now raining in torrents, and a rush of wind and rain almost blow the new-comers into the room. Marfa drops on her knees beside old Yartisch, and while again moistening the rags that ease the burning pain of his tortured back, whispers in his ear,

"You were right, father. He is here. I have found him. He will save her. The messenger was stopped. The orders are destroyed."

The aged man who has arrived with Marfa is now in the centre of the group. But aged no longer. Wig and coverings thrown aside, a young eager face appears, intellectual in the fiery look of the bright and somewhat deeply sunken eyes, resolute and masterful in the shape of the stern mouth and square, powerful jaw. The women crowd around him, kissing his hands, hot tears dropping fast upon them as they do so. The young fellow looks steadily on the anxious faces, and something dims the bright eyes and makes the strong mouth quiver, as he notices their sorrowing and suffering aspect.

"I have been waiting," he says, and the sonorous voice gives new life and vigour to all who hear; "I knew that the hour was near, and that the end was nigh. Dost think," he continued, turning to Marfa, "that He who rideth upon the clouds and ruleth the Heavens aright, will all unmoved see the blood of your innocent child, and that of hundreds of victims, shed to glut the passions of one tyrant? Nay, but He appointeth

men unto vengeance, and lo! we are here and we are ready. Is there one amongst us so base, that he is not eager to peril his own poor life to save those who are to die to-morrow by the hangman's hands? Nay see," he cries excitedly, pointing to old Yartisch and another human bundle that lay beside him, "see those men, beaten well-nigh to death, because they have the hearts of men, and not the savage soul of a merciless beast like that accursed Prince. But to-day the Lord has delivered him into our hand. To-night he dies the death appointed unto him, and to-morrow we appeal to our Father on earth, the Czar."

The tears and sobs of the women, the clenched hands and deep oaths of the men are the answers he receives. The deed to be done to-night has long been determined on, and planned. Years of oppression, years of cruelty have hardened the hearts of the oppressed, and now the wholesale executions ordered for the morrow have driven the unhappy relatives of the sufferers to desperation. A daring deed to-night may perchance save them, and revenge they must and will have.

A favourable opportunity has long been waited for—that opportunity has come. It is here. A renowned leader is amongst them; he has dared unnumbered perils to be amongst them, and now the unjust blows inflicted upon the hapless Ivan have delivered to them the great, the supreme chance.

The keys of every gate and door are on the person of the porter.

Surely, too, Heaven itself is aiding their cause, for the howling storm is raging with steadily increasing violence, and the fury of the elements is giving strength to the fury of the Avengers of Blood.

* * * * *

The storm is raging with undiminished power; but all the inhabitants of the villa, with one exception, are sleeping in absolute unconsciousness not only of the fury of the elements, but of the fury of human passions that are gathering in intensity as hours pass.

The Prince is smoking in his cabinet. Occasionally he glances over papers that lie before him, signing some, and impatiently pushing others aside.

His is a face that years have changed but little. The regular, rigid features are perhaps a trifle more rigid in their exceeding delicacy of outline, but no thread of white mars the beauty of the hair, still as abundant and as waving as in days of yore. But the

eyes have hardened, the cold blue of youth has now turned into the suspicious quivering grey, so surely indicative of stern middle age. The mouth cannot be seen, the thick moustache hides it from sight, but, when angered, the white teeth gleam beneath the fringe, and not unfrequently gnaw the lower lip until blood spouts forth under the sharp white fangs. Woe to him who causes this ebullition of temper!

Whatever the cause, the Prince is now in one of his worst moods. He is not of a nature to bear reproof, and possibly his anger is kindled by certain letters from headquarters. He has long been aware that the wholesale executions in his province must eventually provoke scrutiny, and probably reprimand; but the proud obstinacy of his race, and the vindictive hatred that is his individual peculiarity, have driven him onwards in a course that he had not originally intended to adopt. He had, in fact, this very morning hesitated, but the sight of Marfa, who but rarely comes into his presence, has inflamed his anger into new fury, and the papers he has had to revise to-night have brought to his mind thoughts and recollections that stab him with the sharp burning pain of a scorpion's sting.

It is strange to him to be thus disturbed. His hard and selfish nature is but little capable of experiencing emotion of any kind. Even love has been to him but a temporary and passing gratification. By nature and education habitually self-indulgent, a passion gratified has ever been quickly sated. It is by opposition alone that his feelings become excited, alike for love or for revenge. It is opposition that is now inflaming his torpid blood. It is opposition to his orders, or to his will that is now exciting him to fury. Hence his savage sternness, his tyrannous severity towards those who have contravened his will, and indeed his edicts. Hence the bloodshed and the punishments that, as he well knows, have made his name a byword throughout the land.

Still that very knowledge nerves him onwards to still more ruthless deeds. He has convinced himself that it is his duty to guard his power with even despotic vigilance, and he is determined to strengthen his might in the unhappy district over which he rules. Why then does he falter to-night? Why is it that the scene to be enacted on the coming morn will force itself before him with all its hideous details?

He feels no pity. He knows not what pity means. He has never felt it, and now those about to die are peculiarly obnoxious to him. He is no coward, either mentally or bodily, and therefore

makes no effort to compromise even to himself whatever course of action he thinks fit to pursue. He knows that he has thrown the weight of his authority, has even strained the law to secure the condemnation of several of the accused. Little reck he that it is so. He cares nought for the opinion of others. He cares not that his own conscience, such as it is, condemns him. Why, therefore, is he to-night so disturbed, so restless, with an uneasiness that weighs upon him in spite of every effort to subdue it?

In vain he smokes. In vain he has recourse to the absinthe, of which he is now an habitual drinker. At last the opium-pipe procures comparative quiet. Quiet, but not rest. To-night the soothing drug gives no foretaste of Elysium.

He dreams, and his dreams are of the raging sea. The waves are howling and roaring around him. In vain he seeks to escape; the pitiless waters are closing over his head. Oh God, for a breath of air! His heaving lungs are choking beneath the pressing weight. Great beads of pain and terror stand thick upon his forehead as he awakes, uttering a sharp cry of horror and alarm.

But this is no dream. Is the raging sea indeed encompassing him round about? Nay, that deep and threatening roar is far more terrible in its import than aught made by any element, and bodes still deeper wrath. The roar of a savage multitude is sounding in his ears. Those howls of execration and hatred come from the throats of men who are thirsting for the doomed wretch's life.

He staggers to his feet, choking as he rises, for a dense smoke is pouring in upon him on every side.

He rushes to the doors; all are closed and securely locked.

The windows! He can escape that way, for they open on a spacious balcony. But even his iron nerves are shaken, and he shrinks back appalled, for beneath is a sea of savage faces; faces that tell of unquenchable hate, even more certainly than the infuriated voices that are clamouring for his life.

And now even above the cries rises a solemn chant; the death chant of the Zealots of the Old Religion.

"The Lord looked down from Heaven, that He might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity, and deliver the children appointed unto death. But the enemies of the Lord shall perish. In the name of the Lord we will destroy them."

For a second he cowers back, for a second a strange mist comes

before his eyes. Is the fear of death in hideous shape upon him?

No; no fear is there.

As a flash of light, that torpid blood, now thoroughly aroused, pours like a flame of fire through heart and brain, and raging anger urges him to defy.

"Dogs! cowards!" he shouts, "you dare to threaten me! You dare think I fear such scum as you! Die, dogs! and go to that Hell where I have already sent so many of you!"

A howl of rage, but of rage not unmingled with fear, greets his words; but ere that howl has ceased, like lightning he has discharged many of the barrels of his revolver straight upon the upturned faces beneath him.

As he does so he springs from the balcony, and exerting the utmost power of his magnificent strength he clears the nearest band of assailants, and is making his way rapidly towards the stables.

Can he throw himself on one of his favourite horses he may yet defy his foes.

He has crossed the terrace.

Thank Heaven, the stable door is open! He can even see the horses within. One more rush and he is there.

Within that door is safety—life. But he has not noticed a crowd of women and children who, carrying blazing brands, are rapidly advancing from the village.

The light, the glare, are dazzling him; he falters, but the women see, and with a shriek of fury they rush to intercept his way. As they do so some of the foremost hurl full at the escaping wretch the burning wood they carry. One log strikes him on the temple. Blood rushes from the wound as he falls unconscious, and the women, maddened partly by hate, partly by fear, approach somewhat nearer, but not to aid. In their terror, in their hate, in their very horror at the dreadful sight, rapidly do they cast upon him the heavy masses of faggots and the burning torches with which they have armed themselves. Fiercely do the red flames mount high into the air, and the crowd, affrighted, rush away.

At length all is over. Nought but the gaunt skeletons of blackened beams and mounds of smouldering ashes mark where stood the stately villa. The storm has died away, and the moon is now throwing her clear and pellucid light over the hideous scene of destruction. But even the soft night breeze that has succeeded the howling wind is still raising showers of fine dust

from the not yet extinct embers, and these grey clouds falling upon the orange and lemon trees that still remain, are blotting out all traces of the once fair garden.

How many human beings perished that night has never accurately been ascertained.

The peasants have retreated, glorying in their work, and still from time to time the sighing breeze brings some distinct notes of the wild hymn of the Zealots,

"For He has delivered the oppressor into our hands.

He has cast down the mighty from their seat, and has exalted the humble and meek. . . ."

But what is this black mass lying in the great court-yard? A mass from which smoke and sometimes sparks continue to ascend?

The smouldering pile is close to the stable door, so close indeed that the volumes of smoke rushing from it have suffocated the poor frightened animals within. They are dead, no living creature can be here, yet why do some of the faggots thus move and heave?

At length from beneath the expiring embers creeps forth a scarred and gory wretch. Surely this mass of burnt flesh cannot be alive?

There is not a human being near to say one pitying word to the miserable creature, who, blind, scorched and bleeding, staggers forth from his place of torture into the clear and delicate moonlight.

Pitifully he extends those charred and helpless hands, craving the compassion that will never come to him in this world. He staggers forward, but stumbles and falls. Again he makes an effort, and creeps onwards on hands and knees, feeling his way as best he may, but as he raises his sightless face, his head strikes against a staple in the wall.

With a deep groan of suffering and despair he falls. And falls to rise no more.

In solitary agony Alexis Karàsoumoff expires beneath the very iron to which years before he had fastened the innocent little animal that he had tortured to death in like manner for his own cruel pleasure.

"Vengeance is mine. I will repay, said the Lord."

SOCIAL BATH IN THE LAST CENTURY.

BY MRS. A. PHILLIPS.

AUTHOR OF "BENEDICTA," "MAN PROPOSES," &c.

CHAPTER V.

IN Social Bath of the last century Ralph Allen's mansion at Prior Park was something more than what is popularly known as a gentleman's seat. It might almost have been styled an "academy of letters," for the genial and appreciative nature of the owner drew within its walls some of England's foremost men of culture. In its shady groves Pope was so familiar a figure, that his name has been given to a portion of the grounds he frequented. Around Allen's hospitable board at Prior Park there gathered, at one time or another, most of England's notabilities, from the Prince of Wales to Quin the actor. Here were to be seen Pope, Lord Chesterfield, Warburton, the Fieldings—brother and sister—William Pitt (Earl of Chatham), Richard Graves, for many years rector of Claverton (where Allen now lies buried) and author of the "Spiritual Quixote"—a book that made a considerable stir at the time; Shenstone the poet, and friend of Graves; Hurd, the gentle divine of whom George III. is reported to have said "he was the most naturally polite man he had ever known;" Horace Walpole, Bishop Butler, the Hartleys—father and son—with countless others too numerous to catalogue further, to say nothing of the many notable women of royalty, rank, fashion, and learning, from Princess Amelia to excellent Sarah Fielding—Fielding's sister—who was a resident in Bath, earning her living by writing and teaching.

Ralph Allen in appearance is described as a man of medium height, with an earnest expression of countenance, whose benevolence of nature declared itself in his manner and bearing; a born gentleman, evidently, whose breeding was rarely at fault

and whose attention and hospitality, therefore, were as gracious as they were acceptable to all sorts and conditions of society in Bath. But there were those in the city who, watching its social events as they passed, were not slow to declare that Allen was the dupe of those to whom he so generously opened his heart and home. We have seen how Pope used him; Warburton has also been accused of making Allen his tool, and by no less a person than William Pitt, who was not alone in this opinion. Quin the actor was anything but partial to Warburton for obvious reasons. "The player" in the last century—when Christian burial was denied to Molière—was in the eyes of the Churchman what the worm is to the angler—the devil's bait to lure souls to the hook of destruction. Conscious of his gifts, Quin resented this wholesale condemnation of his vocation, and thought he discerned the hypocrite beneath the mask of the Bishop. He never lost an opportunity of breaking lances in a war of wits with Warburton, and many an anecdote remains of how in the tilt the actor overthrew the bishop.

One evening at Prior Park a curious scene took place between Quin and Warburton, for liberal-minded Ralph Allen welcomed Quin to his house as a guest to be honoured. On this occasion, Warburton—who, we presume, would have felt that he had forfeited his prelacy, to say nothing of heaven, had he been seen at the theatre—asked Quin to give them a recitation from Shakespeare. Quin replied that his memory failed him, and he dare not trust to it for one of these plays; but he thought he might be able to give them an extract from "Venice Preserved." The offer was readily accepted. Standing up in the midst of the assembled company, Quin then declaimed the part in which the following lines occur—

"Honest men
Are the soft cushion on which Knaves
Repose and fatten!"

This he did so pointedly that there was no mistaking the intended allusion. Suiting the action to the words, he turned to Allen as he said "Honest men," and to Warburton as he uttered "knaves." The scene produced quite a sensation among the guests, and Warburton did not, it may be conjectured, again tempt the actor to give them any further recitations.

Most people were agreed in their good opinion of Ralph Allen. It was left to Fielding, however, to immortalize him

under the character of Squire Allworthy in his novel of 'Tom Jones.'

Looking down from the mansion of Prior Park one may see the Manor-house and Church of Widcombe, which are among the most interesting and picturesque features of Bath. The house, which is situated in a lovely valley commanding the most exquisite scenery, was built by Inigo Jones. It was in this house that the fictitious Tom Jones is supposed to have wooed Sophia Western. A picture of the original of Sophia Western, we have been reliably told, hangs in one of the rooms ; but the young lady in question did not share Sophia's ultimate fate, as she was drowned in the ornamental water adjoining the house. There is a popular belief that Fielding drew his character of Squire Western from Mr. Bennett, the gentleman who occupied the manor in Fielding's day, when the novelist was staying with his sister, who lived in Yew Cottage—now Widcombe Lodge—next door to the Manor-house. But Mr. Bennett is described as a very different person to Squire Western ; and although 'Tom Jones' was written mostly in Bath, we have it on the authority of Mr. Cradock, in his literary memoirs, that several of the characters in 'Tom Jones' were taken from the family of the Boothby's, of Tooley Park in Leicestershire, with whom Fielding was intimate.

But why suppose Fielding to be a copyist only ? Like many novelists, he may have sketched a locality which he peopled with beings of his own creation. Readers are too fond of trying to find originals for their favourites in fiction, thus denying to the novelist that power of imagination which creates rather than copies. The truest art is a compound of the real with the ideal, and many of our most famous characters in fiction consist of various qualities engrafted on persons borrowed possibly from living sources, but by no means intended to be portraits of the originals. The novelist adopts a personality or selects a locality as a suitable form in which to embody the soul of his idea. Fielding chose Widcombe Manor as the scene for his fiction, and possibly the external forms of its master and his daughter for his characters ; but when, for the development of his plot, a Squire Western was requisite, he lodged the characteristics of a rough-tongued, brutal father, in the form of the Squire, to act as a foil to the gentle Sophia and her lover Tom.

The creative faculty is a mysterious gift involving a great deal more than novelists are ordinarily aware of ; as it brings them

"en rapport" with influences which very often control them instead of being controlled; as when, in the development of a plot, the characters will at times act their parts quite independently of their author's original intention, an experience to which many authors have borne testimony.

Fielding was introduced to Allen by his sister, Miss or Mistress Sarah Fielding, who lived in Yew Cottage. She was the intimate friend and neighbour of Allen, who thought so highly of her abilities, and her efforts to maintain herself by them, that he generously gave her an annuity of one hundred pounds a year, and remembered her in his will for a legacy. Like her brother, she was a novelist, and wrote a work called 'David Simple,' at a time when women writers were as rare as now they are plentiful.

"Her sex she taught," so says her epitaph on a tablet raised to her memory in Bath Abbey, by her friend Bishop Hoadly, who, among other things, says—

"Her unaffected manners, candid mind,
Her heart benevolent, and soul resigned,
Were more her praise than all she knew or thought,
Though Athen's wisdom to her sex she taught."

Lively Fanny Burney, a generation later, wandering through the Bath Valhalla, exclaims on reading this, "I wonder if any bishop will ever say as much for me when I die!"

Sarah Fielding was devoted to her brother and he to her. She was the harbour of refuge to whom he fled when pursued, as he often was, by debts and difficulties. Her little home, Yew Cottage, sheltered him at these times, and it was on one of these occasions that the sister introduced him to Ralph Allen, who at once became Fielding's friend while he lived, and remembered him and his children in his will when he died.

Fielding repaid the obligation with the only coin with which he was liberally supplied—a generous and grateful heart prompting a pen of genius. With these he painted the character of Allworthy, avowedly and of purpose taken from Allen. There is point and delicacy in the selection of the name ALL . . . *worthy*, which conveyed a compliment in itself to the man he desired to honour and thank. In 'Joseph Andrews' Allen is again introduced. Joseph says of the owner of Prior Park: "Some gentlemen of our cloth report charitable actions done by their lords and masters, and I have heard Squire Pope, the great poet at my lady's table, tell stories of a man that lived . . . at Bath, one Al— Al— I forget

his name, but it is in the book of verses. This gentleman has built up a stately mansion, too, which the Squire likes well. But his charity is seen further than his house, though it stands on a hill ; aye, and brings him more honour too."

This tribute contains a lurking sarcasm on Pope, while doing honour to Allen, as if Fielding was glad to be able to say in retaliation for the offensive epithet of "low-born" that Pope was very ready to take advantage when he could of Allen's hospitalities, and to testify that the object of the verse was a man whose character rivalled the sumptuous spectacle of his dwelling.

Notwithstanding the good prices he received for his books, Fielding was always more or less in difficulties from his reckless mode of living. 'Tom Jones,' however, was nearly being sacrificed in one of his impecunious fits for the sum of £25. The publisher fortunately asked for a day to consider if he could risk such a sum, and Fielding in the meantime met Thomson the poet, to whom he told the transaction. Thomson scorned the idea of Fielding parting with his brains for such a sum, and offered to get him better terms, but Fielding felt himself partly pledged. Never did author wait more anxiously on a publisher hoping to be accepted than did Fielding hoping to be refused. He was refused ! Joyfully he carried his manuscript to Thomson to fulfil his promise. The poet introduced Fielding to Andrew Miller, who handed the book over to his wife to read. She discerned its merits and advised her husband to keep it. Over a pleasant dinner, given by Miller to Fielding and Thomson, the bargain was made which secured Fielding, to his great delight, £200 for the story. Miller is said to have cleared £18,000 by 'Tom Jones,' out of which he paid Fielding, from time to time, various sums to the amount of £2000, bequeathing him also a handsome legacy.

Mention has been made of the friendship that existed between Allen and William Pitt. They fell out, oddly enough, over a word. The word was "adequate." The breach was never healed, although Allen, as if to send a message of peace and goodwill in death, bequeathed Pitt a legacy of £1000 in these words :

"For the last instance of my friendly and grateful regards for the best of friends as well as the most upright and ablest of ministers that has adorned our country, I give to the Right Honourable William Pitt the sum of One Thousand Pounds, to be disposed of by him to any of his children that he may please to appoint." Pitt had a house, No. 7, in the Circus built for him by Wood

in 1755. He represented Bath in Parliament for many years, and was idolized by Allen and the Corporation. It is not out of place to mention Allen in juxtaposition with the Corporation of Bath as he was at all times its most influential member, which provoked some one to call it the "One-headed Corporation." The offence which Pitt took to the word "adequate" arose out of a fervid address of congratulation which the Corporation of Bath sent to the King when peace instead of war was declared between Spain and England. The Corporation styled it an "adequate and advantageous peace," or, as we of a later day would have said, "Peace with Honour." Pitt was strenuously opposed to this "peace," and regarded the address, coming from the people of Bath, as little short of a vote of censure on their representative in Parliament, who considered the peace most "inadequate," so he said. A correspondence ensued between Allen and Pitt on the subject, which was published in the *Bath Chronicle* of June 1763, from which we gather this extract from one of Pitt's letters :

"There are few things can give me more real concern than to find my notion of the public good differ so widely from those of the man whose goodness of heart and private virtues I shall ever love."

As a facsimile of the same address as that sent by the people of Bath was forwarded also from the Cathedral of Gloucester, Pitt attributed the obnoxious wording of it to the pen of Warburton. The Bishop denied the accusation. Pitt had made him a Bishop, and he was anxious to set himself right with his patron, but to no purpose, as Pitt wrote him the following stiff reply :

"I will only venture to observe, my Lord, that the Cathedral of Gloucester, which certainly does not stand alone in true duty and wise zeal towards His Majesty, has, however, the fate not to be imitated by any other Episcopal See in the Kingdom in this unaccustomed effusion of fervent congratulations on the Peace."

It is to be hoped that in the covert sting of this reply from his patron the good Bishop was made to feel some of the pain he had inflicted upon the unfortunate "enthusiast" by his letter already quoted.

Nowhere do we get more striking pictures of the social life of the last century than from the Memoirs of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delaney, an accomplished gentlewoman of the highest distinction who was justly celebrated for her beauty and intelligence, and no less distinguished by the cordiality of disposition. Born in the year 1700 and living until 1788, she almost embraced the

experience of the century. She frequently visited Bath, as did most of her friends, and they spoke and wrote of it nearly always as "the Bath." Quaint pictures of social customs abound in these Memoirs, one of which is very amusing. It was the custom when a man wanted to get married for him to call in the aid of a friend to "assist" him by "recommending" him to a young lady. The delicate task was undertaken by some "best-man" sort of friend, who duly recounted the parentage, education, fortune, and prospects of the would-be suitor to the young lady, who then consulted her friends. If he was thought eligible, matters were allowed into wooing. It was called being "assisted to marry"! The idea is worthy of reproduction to those it may concern, and certainly is preferable to the modern "advertisement." Distracted parents with marriageable daughters, and wandering bachelors, are often at a loss to know how to combine. "The assister" would be a valuable medium, and it might prove an interesting vocation in life to some of the unemployed who are slowly dying of ennui! They might, by a judicious selection, bring the right people together, and thus prevent much misery that now takes place for want of "assistance"! Bath was quite a theatre for these "assisted" marriages, as parents brought their daughters to its gaieties as to a fair, to display their beauty—adorned in pretty "night-clothes"—at the balls; "night-clothes" being the last-century name for an evening dress.

The period of the sixties in Bath was one of social transition. The celebrities of the earlier part of the century who had contributed so much to its splendour were now grown old, and one by one dying off, while the younger celebrities had not come forward. The first to go was Nash, whose abnormally long reign of nearly sixty years had extended far beyond his limits of usefulness, while the gaieties of the town suffered and lost tone with the decrepitude of its leading member. Our poor old Beau had long become a burden to himself and a trial to his friends. It never answers to outlive one's popularity. Human nature, taken seriously, has very little gratitude. The public—the fashionable public especially—are apt to treat old servants as they treat their old dancing shoes—fling them away when they have trodden them out. It was thus the Bath public treated Nash. The walls of his house of cards began to fall about his ears at last, and his old age, as with the old age of all old beaus, was a tragic comedy to witness. Its first act was, unhappily, an Act of Parliament of a very stringent nature, prohibiting gaming

tables in every form, in the hope of suppressing gambling. Those who lost or won ten pounds at play at one time were liable to be indicted within six months after the offence was committed, and to be fined five times the amount for the good of the poor. Further, any one who turned King's evidence against another could have their gambling sins remitted.

Thus did Nash see all his means of earning an "honest" living suddenly snatched away. Hitherto he had been secretly in league with the keepers of these gambling hells in Bath, and now, instead of being able to enforce his gains, he had to trust to their honour and generosity, both of which failed him. And so the poor old King, grown old and irritable in the service of pleasure, suddenly found himself "out in the cold." How was he to live and keep up his establishment, his regal coach-and-six, his many charities? An occasional ball for the benefit of the Master of the Ceremonies would not do it.

A law suit was his only resource. It was a desperate remedy, since it involved proclaiming publicly the secret he had so long and carefully guarded; but no other way was open to him. He accordingly filed a bill in Chancery against his confederates, and thus disclosed not only his source of income, but the infamous part he had been playing throughout his career. While posing as the generous protector of those who frequented the gaming tables, he had all the while been baiting the trap and sharing the spoil! The public was outraged at the scandal. Slanders of all kinds rained thick and fast upon him and the tide of favour completely turned. His condition was desperate. With pitiable agitation he flew to his "torpedo" (as it will be remembered he called his pen) for defence, writing and distributing daily handbills, which he caused to be printed, refuting the charges brought against him. "What a falling off was there!" To see this man reduced to circulating his defence among the company who had ere while trembled at his word and fawned for his good will! One of these handbills shows the influence left upon his mind by Lady Huntingdon, and reads like a fragment of one of Whitfield's sermons. The terror wrought on his own mind by the idea of hell-fire, he now used as a formidable threat to inspire his enemies with a wholesome dread! The handbill is entitled, "A MONITOR" and is headed by the text "*The Lord hateth lying lips.*"

"The curse denounced in my motto," he writes, "is sufficient to intimidate any person who is not quite abandoned in their evil ways, and who have any fear of God before their eyes; everlasting

burnings are a terrible *reward* (*sic*) for their misdoings, and nothing but the most hardened sinners will oppose the judgments of heaven without end. . . . But there are joys in heaven. . . ."

Nash quoting the joys of heaven to silence his detractors and support his claim at law to a share in a disreputable gambling transaction is rather more than we can enlarge upon. Poor old Beau! What form did the "joys of heaven" take in his mind, we wonder? A glorified Assembly Room filled with the *élite* of Society, over whom he should reign as Master of Ceremonies? His mind from long habit could conceive no other, as the joys of a methodistical heaven of perpetual psalmody and eternal sermons, one of the ideas of heaven in those days, were not attractive, and certainly would not have inspired Nash. Still, the echo of the sermon proclaiming the fact of hell-fire for his enemies was what he gratefully caught at; and he hurled the lighted torch among them, enjoying their anticipated doom for having defamed him.

Quin the actor, who had at one time been Nash's friend, is believed to have tried to supplant him as Master of the Ceremonies, and is supposed to have written the following ill-spelt letter—which he sent through a friend to the nobleman whose patronage he solicited. The friend made a copy of it and sent it to Nash, who had it printed and circulated, and was from henceforth Quin's bitter enemy. It is amusing and valuable as a picture of Nash as others saw him then.

"Old beaux Knash," the letter says, "has mead himself so diss-agreeable to all the Company that comes here to Bath that the corperation of this city have it now under thier consideration to remove him from being master of the cereymonies, should he be continuead the inhabitants of this city will be rueind, as the best companey declines to come to Bath on his acc." The writer then proceeds to tell how at the first ball of the season, which was last "Tus'day," a young lady was asked to dance a minuet, but begging to be excused, old Knash cried out before the whole room and with a dreadful oath demanded "what business she had at the ball if she did not mean to dance," which so frightened her that she rose and danced. But the rest of the company marked their disapproval by refusing to dance "a minueat that night." The writer declares that in the country dances no one of note danced except Lords S. and T.—the rest of the company being only the "families of all the habberdas'hers, machinukes and innkeipers in the three kingdoms,

brushed up and collected together." He then compares the present with the past glories of these assemblies. "I have known upon such an occasion as this seventeen Dutchess and Contis to be at the opening of the ball at Bath now not one. This man by his pride and extravagancis has outlived his reasein it would be happy for this city that he was ded, and is now only fit to read Shirlock upon death by which he may seave his soul and gaine more than all profitts he can make by his white hatt suppose it was died red."

It is quite possible that Quin did write this letter. Its peculiar orthography is no proof to the contrary, as a man may have a great deal of genius in one direction and yet not be able to spell (according to the dictionary), especially in those days when as yet Macaulay's phenomenal "school-boy" was not born. When we read, according to Fanny Burney, of a Lord Baltimore saying that he "had been on an *excoriation* to see a ship *lanced*," we may justly suppose that the nice distinctions of the English language were not common property, even among the educated classes. But whether Quin wrote this letter or not, it was evidently a genuine expression of public feeling at the time in Bath, and an instance of the mortifications which now harassed poor old Nash as his attendants to the grave. Little was left of him now but his experiences—and some of these were amusing. He used to call himself "a beau of three generations," and was very humorous in describing the changes he had lived to witness not only in the style of men's wigs, but also in the manner of their love-making. He had seen "flaxen bobs" succeeded by "mejors," and these again by "negligents," which were at last totally routed by "bays" and "ramilees." So with men's love-making. "The lover in the reign of King Charles was solemn, majestic, formal. He visited his mistress in state, languished for a favour, knelt when he toasted his goddess, walked with solemnity, performed the most trifling things with decorum, and even took snuff with a flourish. The beau of the latter part of Queen Anne's reign was disgusted with so much formality; he was pert, smart, and lively; his *billet doux* were written in quite a different style from that of his antiquated predecessor; he was for ever laughing at his own ridiculous infatuations, till at last he persuaded the lady to become as ridiculous as himself! The beau of his later years was still more extraordinary than either. His whole secret in intrigue, consisted in perfect indifference. The only way to make love now," Nash would say, when an old man, "is to take

no manner of notice of the lady, which method is the surest way to secure her affections."

All men did not follow Nash's advice, to their cost, it seems, as the subjoined letter, taken from the *Chronicle* of February 2nd, 1764, will show. It was the custom in those days to address one's confidences not to the editor, but to the Printer, to whom a young lady thus writes :—

"You must know, Sir, I am what they please to call a Toast and a Fortune, and am consequently tormented with a number of impertinent Humble Servants. But one is the plague of my life, not only from his Assiduity, but his Conduct and Behaviour. He seems to have a design to bully me, or fright me into compliance, for he Courts me, Sword in Hand; and on my first Frown, he draws, and tells me if I am in the least cruel, he will before my eyes stab himself immediately. Now, Mr. Printer, I am terrified at the Apprehension of a Man's killing himself for me; I have a thousand fears about seeing a bloody ghost at my Feet Curtains in the Dead of Night; yet I can't bear the thought of marrying a man, I scorn detest and abominate. . . . What shall I do?—Shall I let him kill himself?—If he is Coward enough to fright me, can you imagine him valiant enough to keep his Word? I should be glad of the advice of some of your Correspondents, for I know not what to do with this threatening *Felo de se* Lover.

"YOUR CONSTANT READER."

Being a "Fortune" was generally understood to be an heiress; and in the marriage announcements of the last century the amount of the lady's fortune was always given; if she did not happen to possess one, either her beauty or her virtues were quoted as equivalents, as may be seen from the two following announcements, taken out of many from the *Bath Chronicle*.

"Last Tuesday was married Philip Allen, Esq^{re}. (nephew to Ralph Allen, Esq^{re}, at Prior Park), to Miss Carteret of Kensington, with a fortune of £10,000."

"Yesterday was married, at the Chapel in the Square, Anthony Keck, jun., Esq^{re}, to Miss Legh, daughter of Peter Legh of Lyme, in Cheshire, Esq^{re}. A young lady whose Beauty few can equal; whose Virtue none can surpass."

Some of these letters "to the Printer" in the old *Bath Chronicles* of the last century are highly amusing, and give us a picture of the state of society that throws a strong light on the popular sentiments of the day on social topics. Here is one that

will command some modern sympathy. "Among the pretty girls of the present age it is a general Complaint that they have many Admirers but few Lovers : They dont joke when they say so; it is a Truth not to be trifled with, they feel the Mortification and wonder at it." The writer—a bachelor—who signs himself "Harry Heartfree," then quotes "a venerable virgin," who, lamenting the degeneracy of the age, declares "Courting is nothing now to what it was when I was young! The Flirts now-a-days make the Fellows so saucy, that there is hardly found a respectful Lover." The writer then explains why this is. "The women of the last Age were more respected because they were more reserved. . . . A Woman must *repel* before she can *attract*. . . . Ovid, who knew human Nature . . . discovered not a little penetration when he made Daphne fly so fast from her lover ; for his passion was increased by pursuit. Our modern Daphnes are quite other sort of people ; instead of flying from, they run into, the Arms of their Apollos and are afterwards surprised that they grow cool. Lovers are like Sportsmen, to whom the Possession of the game is nothing to the pleasures of the chase. . . ." with a great deal of further plain-speaking that is more candid than choice.

To this letter a Miss Harriet Sprightly replies the following week, saying "That all our pretty girls have more admirers than Lovers, is but too true; and who is to Blame . . . The Ladies ? . . . but I say the Men : For here as soon as a handsome Girl makes her appearance, they all flock round her, fill up her head with their Praises of her Beauty, and without making an absolute Declaration of Love, give her all the reason in the World to imagine that each esteems her as the most lovely of her sex. Thus when they have by their Deceit and Flattery changed a modest unaffected girl into a vain, bold, conceited coquette, they neglect her for the next new face, and leave her to reflect on their baseness in deceiving and her own Folly in believing. . . . That an affable Reserve . . . is more becoming in our sex . . . is undoubtedly true ; but as Gentlemen of late have thought fit to divest themselves of Good manners, the Ladies were under the Necessity of laying by their Reserve, or else they would never be taken the least notice of by those Admirers of themselves the Men. Ovid might know a good deal of human Nature as it was in his time ; but it is so greatly altered that I question if Daphne now-a-days was to fly whether our modern Apollos would have any inclination to pursue unless indeed the Lady's Fortune was superior to his. . . ."

The Printer evidently thought that the Lady had scored, as he appends a footnote, hoping "this lady will continue her Favours."

In another place is a letter from an alarmed spinster calling attention to a paragraph to the effect that the "Tax on old Maids and Bachelors will take place soon after the session." "Now I think it hard our Sex"—she writes naively—"should be included in this tax; for I daresay there is very few single gentlewomen but what would marry if the Batchelors thought proper to make choice. Therefore it will certainly be very severe upon Ladies, to pay for living in a State that is quite contrary to their Inclinations." A clear case this for "assistance"!

Here is a hint for forthcoming electors, which will show them how things were managed in Bath and elsewhere by gentlemen who were forbidden to bribe, yet were anxious to become candidates for Parliament. In the *Bath Chronicle* for September 13th, 1764, we read, "A gentleman of spirit and resolution has generously offered to deposit £3000 to be laid out, for the public benefit of this City at the discretion of the Mayor and Corporation, provided they choose him as one of the Members of Parliament at the next election."

But to return now to Nash for the last time. Goldsmith describes him as having arrived at a condition when he was past the power of either giving or receiving pleasure. He was old, poor, insolent, dirty, and peevish. Yet he loved to haunt with tottering steps the scenes of his former triumphs. He sunk lower and lower in public respect, until finally he became that most pitiable of objects, "an old man striving after pleasure when all power to enjoy has passed away."

The clergy and the pious were shocked at this living satire on humanity, and tortured his declining days with such loud threats of eternal damnation, that they tended to harden rather than turn him to repentance. Here is a specimen. "If you do not remedy in some degree the evils you have sent abroad . . . you will be wretched above all men, to eternity. The blood of souls will be laid to your charge; God's jealousy, like a consuming flame, will smoke against you as you yourself will see. . . . Would you be rescued from the fury and fierce anger of God? You must make haste. . . ." and a great deal more of a like comforting and alluring character, which served only to sting but could not change. No true reformation of life is ever effected through fear, which leaves the heart where it found it, with only

the exchange of hypocrisy for immorality. Poor old Nash had built up his soul on pleasure and with it; and now it was too late to pull the structure to pieces and rebuild. The ruling passion clung to him to the end. So long as he could stand he loved to dress himself, and would hobble to the Assembly Rooms, where he would appear as a hideous old ghost haunting the scenes of his departed glories.

But worn-out nature overtook him in the end, and he died in 1761, at the ripe age of eighty-seven, after a reign in Bath prolonged to over fifty years. His death awoke—as death so often does—regret and gratitude, when neither could benefit their object. The Bath Corporation rose to the occasion, and gave him such a splendid funeral, that the whole city turned out to assist at or witness the spectacle. The local papers wrote the most eulogistic obituary notices, one even going so far as to liken him to “a constellation of the heavenly sphere!” Doctor Oliver, his old friend, sketched an outline of his life, that reads like an apotheosis, in which he chronicles his virtues while dealing lightly with his faults, pointing out that Nash was ever “the servant of the poor and the distressed: whose cause he pleaded amongst the rich” . . . with such an authoritative address “that few of the worst hearts had courage to refuse what their own inclinations would not have prompted them to bestow.” A handsome monument to Nash’s memory in the Bath Abbey records in a Latin epitaph his long services to Bath—which, being translated, finishes thus :—

“Ye muses and graces mourn
 His death.
 Ye powers of love, ye choirs
 Of youth and virgins.
 But, thou, O Bathonia! more than the rest,
 Cease not to weep,
 Your King, your teacher, patron, friend,
 Never, ah never, to behold
 His equal ”

The sensibilities of the last age are never more conspicuous than on the monumental tablets in our churches. The measure of their truth and sincerity may be tested by comparing what we have read of Nash in life with what was written on his tomb, which compels us to believe that the pathos of the last century, as thus exhibited, was only another name for bathos.

THE END.

BEGUN IN JEST.

BY MRS. NEWMAN.

AUTHOR OF "HER WILL AND HER WAY," "WITH COSTS,"
"THE LAST OF THE HADDONS," &c.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EDWARD LEICESTER.

"MR. LEICESTER wishes to see you, if you please, Miss Leith," said one of the maid-servants, entering the school-room where Mabel was sitting with the children. "He is in the drawing-room."

"He has brought a message from Miss Temple!" thought Mabel in pleased surprise. "She is coming here, or we are to go there, I suppose. Ah, how much good she will do me, without my having to explain anything to her! She knows nothing about Gerard, and can ask no questions to which I should find it difficult to reply. She will help me without knowing it."

Absorbed in this thought, Mabel entered the drawing-room with a flush of pleasure in her cheeks, and held out her hand with a smile. "How do you do, Mr. Leicester? You have brought me a message from Miss Temple, have you not?" she hurriedly began, giving not a moment's thought to him.

"Miss Temple!" he somewhat stiffly repeated, not taking very kindly to the idea of its being supposed he had nothing better to do than to carry about messages for governesses. "No, I have not seen her just lately, Miss Leith;" adding, for reasons she might understand later: "My mother superintends in the school-room. She devotes herself to the children, which renders supervision of mine unnecessary. I find it quite sufficient

to put them through a weekly examination, with respect to the progress they are making in their studies. For this purpose they come to me for an hour or two in the library ; but in the interval I leave everything to my mother and their good governess."

"Oh, indeed !" disappointedly ejaculated Mabel, at once losing all interest in him. "The servant must have made a mistake, I think. She said that you wanted to see me ;" adding, as she moved towards the door, "I will let Mrs. Brandreth know you are here, Mr. Leicester."

"No, I beg of you to remain," with a gracious smile, not averse from the idea that it should seem impossible that his visit was intended for her. It added so much to his dignity. "I enquired specially for you, Miss Leith. In point of fact, I have something to say—that is—a communication to make which very much concerns you."

"Concerns me ?" she repeated, mentally adding, "He knows Miss Temple is about to leave. Probably he has heard I am going from here, and thinks I might do for his children."

"Will you allow me to give you a chair, Miss Leith ?" he said, wheeling one towards her, by way of informing her that he should prefer being seated.

She gave him a little impatient glance from the corners of her eyes, as she sat down in the nearest chair.

He took one opposite to her, endeavouring, meanwhile, to arrange his thoughts so as to render the communication as impressive as possible ; but feeling somewhat more at loss for words than Edward Leicester was accustomed to be. The anxiety she had undergone had left traces which were evident even to him, in the way of etherealizing her beauty, and his admiration was very plainly expressed, had she eyes to see.

She waited, her eyes meditatively cast down. Nothing ; he could possibly have to say would be of any interest to her. But it was no use trying to hurry him ; he would take his time in his dull, heavy way.

"I was very much impressed by your goodness to my children the other day, Miss Leith," he presently began, his eyes dwelling complacently upon the beautiful refined face as he went on : "Very much impressed indeed ; for I felt sure that a young lady, so kind and willing to sacrifice her own pleasure for——"

"I sacrificed nothing, Mr. Leicester. Just then I happened to be in the vein for playing with them, and I enjoyed it quite as much as they did," she replied, feeling sure now that her first impression had been a correct one. He was about to ask her to take charge of the children. To bring him to the point, give him his reply, and so get rid of him as quickly as possible, she went on: "It was just the frolic of the moment; I do not care to be always playing with children, Mr. Leicester."

"No, no; I can quite understand that. I am sure you are conscientious in the matter of work."

"I have my moods about work also," carelessly.

"But they are right and proper ones, of that I feel convinced."

"Stupid man! Why won't he come to the point?" thought Mabel. "That only shows how little you know me, Mr. Leicester. You will find there are not many like Miss Temple, and certainly I am not. She is leaving you, is not she?"

"I believe so. But it will not be difficult to find another instructress for my children; governesses are plentiful enough," for the moment forgetting that he was speaking to one. "I leave all such arrangements as those to my mother, Miss Leith. My errand is to discuss a much more important subject."

Discuss important subjects with Mr. Leicester! She was almost on the point of curtly declining, but told herself it would be of no use. She would only have to listen to his stupid whys and wherefores all the longer. "What is it, then?" she a little brusquely enquired.

"I am very deeply impressed"—how hard he had striven to get rid of the impression only himself could know—"by your goodness to my children."

"You said that before!" thought impatient Mabel, as he went on.

"And I may add that the impression deepened and—in point of fact, widened——"

"Deepened and widened!" mentally ejaculated Mabel. "When will he come to the point?"

"Into a—warmer sentiment and—I have now decided to make you the offer of—my hand, Miss Leith"—with all the solemnity and importance which the subject warranted.

If his tone and manner conveyed the impression that he thought he was doing a very generous thing, he was not aware that they did.

She sat gazing at him with widely opened eyes in unfeigned amazement. She had been so entirely unprepared for this.

"What am I to understand, Mr. Leicester? Is it possible that you wish me to think you are making love speeches to me?" she indignantly exclaimed, rising to her feet.

"It is not only possible, but true," he replied, entirely misunderstanding the cause of her astonishment. "And I shall very soon be able to prove quite to your satisfaction that——"

"After seeing me but once!"

"Twice," he complacently reminded her. "And at church, you know. Besides, I assure you when I have quite made up my mind upon a point——"

"It is too much!"

"Not at all—not at all!"—with an encouraging smile. "I must not allow you to undervalue your own——"

"What have I done to deserve this?" she ejaculated. "It is really quite shameful!"

He fell back for a moment under the scorn flashing from her eyes, but presently imagined that he had not made himself understood, and complacently recommenced:

"My dear Miss Leith, I am asking you to be my wife—Mrs. Leicester."

"Well, sir"—losing her last scrap of patience—"have you the impertinence to suppose that I could possibly care to be Mrs. Leicester?"

He stood for a few seconds gazing at her in mute astonishment unable to credit his senses. But her tone and the scorn in her eyes seemed unmistakable, though he was still slow to believe. He presently contrived to say:

"Do you then wish me to understand that—you decline?"

"Decline! Good gracious, yes; of course I do. And I consider your coming to me, in this way, almost a stranger, and certainly without the least encouragement from me, as little better than an insult. Did you suppose I should be so ready to assent, that you would only have to inform me of your intention?"

He was too completely dumfounded to make any reply. This was a *contretemps* he had not for a moment anticipated. It had cost him a great deal of hesitation and anxious deliberation before he arrived at the decision to make the offer, but the offer once made, he considered that the matter would be settled. To be refused by a girl dependent upon her own exertions for

her daily bread—and in this way! To be told that it was an impertinence to suppose she could care to be Mrs. Leicester! He could only gaze at her in solemn silence.

She did not wait to hear anything he might have to say. In her indignation she gave him only a very slight inclination of the head, by way of leave-taking, and passed out of the room.

He stood where she left him, immersed in thought. His pride had received a wound which it would take a long time to heal. To be rejected by a chit of a governess—rejected! And this after having, in his ponderous way, made elaborate preparations for the announcement of his engagement. He had that morning informed his mother that he contemplated a second marriage, and that she must prepare herself for a possible disappointment with regard to certain points. It was probable that in the outset she might see cause for some objection, but this she must, for his sake, do her best to overcome. What his bride might lack, he possessed. In fine, he had decided; and when he had decided to do a thing, he did it. After this to be obliged to acknowledge he had failed!

He went out of the room by the window and slowly made his way from the terrace to the avenue. Rejected, and by a governess! Edward Leicester! His mind was slow, and not very fertile in expedients. He was still endeavouring to hit upon some way of explaining matters to his mother, without sacrificing what he termed his self-respect, as he passed under the old elms from which the rooks flew in and out, appearing to caw mockingly at him, when he heard some one addressing him by name. Looking up, he saw Mrs. Brandreth advancing smilingly towards him beneath the trees.

"How do you do, Mr. Leicester? Have you been to the house?" as they shook hands. "I am sorry that I happened to be out. Reginald is not down to-day, too. Will you not return for a rest? Warm still for the season, is it not?"

"Thank you, no. It is very pleasant here. With your permission?"

They both sat down upon one of the seats under the trees, and Mrs. Brandreth proceeded to make the due enquiries respecting Mrs. Leicester and the children.

"I hear you are to lose Miss Temple, Mr. Leicester?"

"Yes; she is about to be married, my mother tells me."

"Mrs. Leicester says she is so very conscientious, and to be depended upon with the children."

"Yes, I believe so. There have been no difficulties during her residence at the Hall."

"You have been very fortunate ; much more so than I."

He looked a little curious. "Indeed ! Is not Miss Leith so efficient ?"

"She gets on pretty well with the children, so far as their studies go. But she really seems so very inexperienced, and, to say the least, careless about appearances."

"That is a defect, certainly," he replied, not now altogether averse from hearing that Mabel was not quite so perfect as he had imagined her to be.

"Yes, indeed !" beginning to feel that she was listened to with something more than courtesy, and posing very prettily. "To tell the truth, I find myself very awkwardly placed, Mr. Leicester. I am very desirous to be considerate, and make all possible allowance for an attractive girl in Miss Leith's position ; but I am obliged to consider my own also, and of this I have been compelled to remind her. It is all the more difficult for me because Reginald will not admit that Miss Leith could be in any way to blame."

He murmured a word or two which sounded like sympathy ; and, after a graceful little apology for troubling him with her worries and annoyances, she went on. "But, really, a word of advice would be so welcome, and I have not a friend here to whom I could speak. I was so accustomed to trust to my poor Arthur's judgment," looking up into his face with a pretty air of trust and confidence which struck him as a great contrast with the scorn and defiance he had so lately seen in another face. She pleaded so sweetly for advice, too ; the one thing above all others he liked to give.

"I should be very happy to give you any assistance that is in my power to give," he replied, with a low bow ; more than a little curious now to hear in what respect Miss Leith had shown so much disregard for appearance.

"One feels so afraid of appearing unkind or ungenerous—but—really ! I should not like to mention it to every one," with graceful hesitation ; "but one intuitively feels where one may trust, and I am impelled to confide in you."

"You may trust me, Mrs. Brandreth," telling himself that her very hesitation was a point in her favour. She evidently did not like saying anything unfavourable to another, and therefore would be the more conscientious in what she did say.

"The first little unpleasantness occurred upon my return after a short absence from home, Mr. Leicester. I was informed that while I was away, Miss Leith had spent a great deal of her time in walking about the park with Mr. Harcourt, who had just come to stay with Reginald, leaving her pupils to take care of themselves."

"Very improper," severely; although Mr. Leicester was unconscious of experiencing anything more than a strictly judicial feeling in the matter. Would he not have said the same with regard to any other governess who had acted in a similar way?

"I must say that it appeared so to me, and I felt that it was only my duty to point out the impropriety to Miss Leith. Afterwards, Reginald told me that he himself was most to blame in having brought it about, by asking her to show Mr. Harcourt the lower grounds, or something of that kind. I thought it rather injudicious of him, and frankly said so. But, as he seemed to think there was no harm in what had occurred, and Miss Leith promised that the same thing should not happen again, I was willing to think no more of it, and agreed that she should remain with me."

"Very kind and considerate of you, Mrs. Brandreth."

"I meant to be so, Mr. Leicester; but, really, Miss Leith has acted so very strangely! What will you think when I tell you that, notwithstanding her promise that nothing of the kind should occur again, I only a few days ago came upon her talking in the most confidential way with Mr. Harcourt in the plantations, her hands clasped in his?"

What he did think he did not explain. He could only repeat, "Most improper."

"I thought so, unless there was some secret engagement between them, which, when I questioned her, she said was not the case. She acknowledged that it was quite natural I should be surprised and displeased. She also admitted that I could not, under the circumstances, be expected to wish her to remain here. And yet, you will hardly credit it, Mr. Leicester, Reginald is as ready as ever to find all sorts of excuses for her. What is more, he has now taken it into his head that she is overworked and requires all sorts of indulgences which a governess has no right to expect. I have yielded to his persuasions," with a slight blush at the remembrance of the cheque; "but I feel that by doing so I may be placing myself in a false position. I can only hope that it

will all be satisfactorily explained, as they tell me it will, although I do not think I ought to have been kept in ignorance."

"Certainly not. I am surprised that Aubyn can have lent himself to anything of the kind."

"It is really very good of you to allow me to open my heart to you in this way, Mr. Leicester. Quite a relief to me, I assure you." In which she was perfectly sincere; it was desirable to secure such allies as the Leicesters in the event of any unpleasantness. Let the promised explanation of the mystery be what it might, it was well that it should be known that she had not been quite fairly treated. "One is so afraid of seeming to have any uncharitable feeling to a young girl in Miss Leith's position, you know."

"None could for a moment suppose you capable of that, Mrs. Brandreth," he replied, looking at her with some admiration. Many people called her fine-looking. She certainly had high-bred features and a refined expression, and her manners—he shuddered at the remembrance of Mabel's brusquerie—were acknowledged to be perfect. As his eyes dwelt complacently upon her, a new idea suddenly flashed across his mind; a way of avoiding the one thing he so much dreaded—that of having to tell his mother that Edward Leicester had been rejected, and by whom!

As he presently proceeded to express his sympathy with Mrs. Brandreth, it was with some *empressement* of manner which she was quick to notice, although she was not quite so quick to perceive the cause. When at length it began to dawn upon her that he was speaking with intention, that the wealthy and influential Mr. Leicester, who had been so long the despair of matrimonial mammas, was, in fact, approaching very close to making her an offer of his hand, she had for the moment some difficulty in concealing her delight and surprise. He soon found the way made easy for him, and the words were spoken which sealed the compact.

With a becoming little flush in her cheeks, and her eyes modestly downcast, she placed her hand in his, murmuring a few words of acceptance, and Edward Leicester found himself the affianced husband of Mrs. Brandreth. He was almost as surprised at the sudden way in which it had all come about as was she herself, although he took it for granted that her sentiments towards him dated much farther back than did his for her, in fact, that his offer had only brought to the surface what had long

existed in her mind. Had not his mother more than once told him that she thought Mrs. Brandreth would be very glad to become Mrs. Leicester? Yes, he had found the wife best suited to him, he told himself. Could she have been eight or ten years younger it might have been preferable, perhaps, but he was not so sure of this now as he had been earlier in the day.

At the same time no thought of money entered into his calculations. Even the children, although they might be regarded as incumbrances, were to be honourably cared and provided for. The more he thought of the step he had taken, the more was he satisfied, and he very soon managed to forget that it had been done to spare himself the humiliation of being obliged to inform his mother that he had been rejected, and by a governess!

Mrs. Brandreth was already looking the younger and better for her newly-found happiness when they parted, she to return triumphantly to the house, and he to carry the news to his mother. He found her in great anxiety, so much so that she was quite ready to welcome the idea of his engagement to Mrs. Brandreth. It was very different from his marrying some chit of a girl only just out for her beauty, or, worse still, making a descent in the social scale, as his few mysterious words before he set forth had given her reason to fear. Mrs. Brandreth was about his own age, and every way his equal. There was, in fact, no obstacle but the children; and, in her relief, Mrs. Leicester was ready to overlook that. Anything was better than a *més-alliance*, if he must have another wife. She was therefore quite ready to show her approval of her son's choice, offering to drive over to Beechwoods on the morrow. "It will be more gracious if I go to her instead of waiting for her to be brought to me, you know, Edward. A Leicester can take the initiative, and it will tell in her favour with people," said his mother, who, in truth, liked doing gracious things—when they were properly appreciated.

"You are very good, mother, and I am sure——" not certain as to her Christian name, he was obliged to add — "Mrs. Brandreth will rightly estimate such attention." Altogether, Edward Leicester was able to feel that he had done a sensible thing. Had he returned home the accepted lover of Mabel Leith, he would only have been able to feel that he had done a very delightful thing. He could now only hope that she would forget what had passed between them as quickly as possible. Of one

thing he intuitively felt convinced—his secret was safe with her. Even he understood her sufficiently to recognize that much.

Mrs. Brandreth made her way back to the house in a very delightful frame of mind. No girl in her teens could be more elated with her first love story than was she, as she tripped airily along the drive. To think that this great good had been in store for her, while she was repining at her future prospects, seemingly so depressing! What would the Severns say? How envious poor Miss Hurst would be! It was altogether delightful; she was the most fortunate of women!

But the Severns and Hursts were not on the spot, and it was positively necessary to tell the news to some one. Reginald was in town. To whom—? Suddenly she recollected the governess. Yes, she would tell Miss Leith, she thought, with a pleasant smile of triumph, turning her steps towards the schoolroom.

She found the children gathered round Mabel, and bade them go to Soames and ask her to dress them for a drive with mamma. Dear Edward had been so very kind and considerate when he alluded to the children, and it was only right that the world should see that there was no necessity for keeping them in the background. His love for her was strong enough to render him desirous to act the part of guardian to her children—so she chose to interpret his few words with regard to them.

They displayed very little enthusiasm about the drive with mamma. They had, in fact, no pleasant recollections in connection with such drives, and went off with listless faces and lagging feet to be dressed; Algy murmuring that he couldn't "bear company drives, when you had to sit still and not speak."

"Not very filial, are they, Miss Leith?" said Mrs. Brandreth. "They will be in better training by-and-by, I hope. Children so much need a father's influence, do they not?"

Mabel made some reply to the effect that she supposed children were the better for a father's care; wondering, as she spoke, what made Mrs. Brandreth smile and cast down her eyes in the way she was doing.

"My poor little ones! Yes; it will be so much better for them."

Mabel merely inclined her head, she had hardly caught the sense of the other's words, the absent expression stealing over her face again. But Mrs. Brandreth was not to be deprived of her triumph that way. After a moment or two she went on,

with a pretty conscious air, "They will very soon have the care they require now."

"A father's care—are you going to be married then, Mrs. Brandreth?" asked straightforward Mabel.

"I have suffered myself to be persuaded, Miss Leith. And it is a great pleasure to me to know that Mr. Leicester is very desirous to act a father's part to my children."

"Mr. Leicester!" repeated Mabel with widely open eyes, involuntarily adding in her astonishment, "Is it possible?"

As it happened, the other was not just then inclined to be critical of the governess's manner, nor had she any doubts as to the effect of the communication she herself had made. "It is only natural and to be expected that a girl in Miss Leith's position, and with a little ambition, should experience some degree of envy at hearing of such a success as mine," thought Mrs. Brandreth.

As, with flushed cheeks and downcast eyes, Mabel was about to try to make some excuse for her involuntary expression of surprise, the other smilingly said, "They will have a beautiful home, will they not?"

"You—are—really going to—marry him, Mrs. Brandreth?"

"As I told you, I have accepted, Miss Leith."

Mabel strove hard to overcome her inclination to laugh. He must have gone direct from her to propose to the other! If she could know the truth! The colour deepened in her cheeks as she glanced at Mrs. Brandreth smiling complacently at her rings, and recollected her own words to him as to the impertinence of supposing she could care to be Mrs. Leicester. Of course it was wrong of her—she ought not to have spoken in that way. But he had appeared so conceited—so very sure that she would be only too eager to avail herself of such an opportunity—and she had got irritated and impatient, and—there it was! He might, however, be sure that what had taken place between them would be kept secret by her, and of course he would not mention anything about it himself—for his own sake.

"Are you going to be married soon, Mrs. Brandreth?"

"I am afraid Mr. Leicester will not agree to a very long delay," replied that lady, as, smiling graciously at nothing, she quitted the room to go and prepare for her drive to "the good Hursts." It was said that Miss Hurst had once indulged hopes of becoming Mrs. Leicester.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"MY LOVING LUCY."

Mrs. Brandreth's triumph was complete. She was taken into favour by Mrs. Leicester—a success in itself—and congratulations poured in upon her from all sides. If a discordant note was occasionally struck, it was in a not very audible tone. It was, indeed, generally recognized that it would be desirable to be upon visiting terms with the wife of one holding Mr. Leicester's position in the county. If there were any doubts as to the strict correctness of certain statements with respect to her hesitation in accepting the offer, her thought of her dear little ones, and so forth, they were not hinted to her.

If, on her side, she suspected something of what was passing in the minds of some of her friends, she could make allowance for what she called human nature. She did not expect people to be more enthusiastic about another's good fortune than she herself would have been. It was quite enough to have people's congratulations, without enquiring too closely as to what they felt.

One heard the news without any undercurrent of dissatisfaction whatever. To Reginald Aubyn it came not only as a surprise, but a very delightful one—without a single drawback. He had, in fact, of late begun to find his responsibilities with regard to his sister-in-law and her children pressing rather heavily upon him. The rest of the family—his brother, a confirmed invalid travelling about from one watering-place to another in search of health, and her own relations—were content to leave her and her children upon his hands, letting it be seen that they took it for granted he would provide for them. He was willing and anxious enough to do his best, but he found that he could help neither her nor her children in the way he would have liked to do, and he felt that the difficulties of his position would be likely to increase rather than diminish, as the latter grew older. However lacking he might be in some respects, Mr. Leicester would be an honourable and safe guardian for Agatha and her children, and possess an authority which their uncle had not over them—an authority which would be fully exercised.

Under the guidance of Mr. Leicester and his mother—Reginald Aubyn was sufficiently acquainted with them both to know that this would be quite as stringent as was necessary—Agatha would

make a passable county lady. Moreover, she would not be so much as now under the influence of her doubtful brother. Richard Noel would find no welcome in Mr. Leicester's house, and when he found that he could no longer obtain money from his sister, he might be induced to limit his expenses to his income, or be satisfied to increase this by legitimate means.

Reginald was, therefore, very sincere and hearty in his congratulations, and what was of a great deal more importance to Mrs. Brandreth, he showed that he was inclined to act very liberally, promising to present her with a good dowry in lieu of the yearly allowance he had intended to make her on his marriage. With ten thousand from him, in addition to her own eight hundred a year—which, with Mr. Leicester's ready assent, was eventually to go to her children—she would be fairly dowered, and all responsibility on Reginald Aubyn's side would be at an end. He pleasantly reflected that as Mrs. Leicester, with a town as well as country house, and the occupations of a great lady, she would have very little time to spare for Dorothy, and this relieved him from another difficulty. No two could possibly be more unlike in their tastes and lives than were Agatha and his Dorothy, and he had been of late a little troubled with the thought that he had made a mistake in offering the former the use of the Dower House after his marriage, recognizing that she might be a little too close to Beechwoods. Dorothy was not likely to be influenced in the slightest degree by the taste and opinions of the other, but she might be pained and annoyed, and this would render him combative. So far, he had arranged matters as he pleased, without troubling himself about his sister-in-law's attempts at interference and little manœuvring ways. But with Dorothy it would be different. She would not understand a nature such as Agatha's, and it would be his business to protect her from petty annoyances. All this he was now spared, and he felt as though a heavy burden had been lifted from his shoulders.

Their congratulations were mutual, and with sincerest goodwill on both sides. It was no trouble now to Mrs. Brandreth that he was about to be married; it would make no difference to her. She was, in recognition of his generosity to her, even ready to stretch a point in his future wife's favour, if it should turn out, as she suspected, that he had chosen one who was not socially his equal. She gave him a hint of this, sending all sorts of pretty messages to his *fiancée*, and expressing a hope that they would soon meet. She was longing to welcome her new sister-

in-law into the family. Indeed, indeed, dear Reginald need make no mysteries with her, she assured him in the kindest way, giving him to understand that she was prepared to do all that was kind. "And, introduced by Mrs. Leicester, her position in the county will be assured, you know."

He nodded and smiled, promising that all mystery should be cleared up very shortly, and she would then find that his Dorothy was not unworthy of Mrs. Leicester's friendship.

Dorothy! Mrs. Brandreth thought the name did not sound very promising; but remembered that old-fashioned names had been in vogue again, and tried to hope for the best, assuring him that she was quite ready to take his word. Whatever dear Reginald said or did always proved to be right!

A smile once more dwelt upon his lips, as his thoughts reverted to the time when he had made some rather severe comments with respect to certain long bills which had found their way to his library table, instead of to her. Well, it was pleasant to know that Agatha bore no malice; and certainly he felt none.

He walked though the park, on his way to the railway station, in a very enjoyable frame of mind, appreciating the beautiful sweeps of verdure, fine old trees, and glimpses of the not distant sea, as he had perhaps not before done, with the thought that his home was soon to be Dorothy's—a home of rest and peace for them both, during the intervals in their London work.

At the lodge, he paused a few moments to say a kindly word to the woman, who came out to courtesy her thanks for some service rendered. "All going on well in the village, Mrs. Green?"

"Excepting widow May, sir. She takes on terrible about her daughter going like that."

"Lucy! Where has she gone then?"

"They say she's gone off with a lover, as she's been seen walking about with."

"A lover? Oh, I understand;" thinking that perhaps Bloggs had persuaded Lucy to be married at once. "Mrs. May need not be anxious; I know the man. He will be as careful of her as her mother herself would be—persuaded Lucy to be married at once, that's all."

"That's what she said in her letter to her mother, sir," replied Mrs. Green, at the same time wondering a little at his tone and manner. It must be true, then; Mr. Harcourt was really going

to marry Lucy, and Mr. Aubyn did not disapprove of it, or he would never look like that.

With a pat on the cheek of the baby, and a nod and smile to her, he passed through the gate, and along the road to the railway station, his thoughts reverting once more to Dorothy, and his good fortune in being spared any further anxiety and responsibility on account of his sister-in-law and her children. As to Mabel and Gerard, he smiled to himself at the thought of anything preventing those two from eventually finding out that they could not live without each other. Meantime the little probation they seemed to be going through would do neither any harm. Gerard would perhaps learn to be a little more candid as to his real opinions, and she to put up with something less than perfection.

But what had become of Gerard? Aubyn had for the first few days hardly noticed, attaching no significance to the fact, that they did not meet, but he was now beginning to feel a little surprised at it; and, on finding that he had not during that time made his appearance at Kensington, was puzzled as well as surprised. He made his way to Gerard's chambers, only to be informed twice successively that Mr. Harcourt was out. When, losing patience, he questioned a little sharply, Wright became rather confused, murmuring something about his master being just then a great deal occupied with business matters connected with the estate—the new cottages he was building, and—and—the lawyers took up so much of his time.

His mind set at rest, so far—Gerard was at any rate not ill—Aubyn said he should perhaps see Mr. Harcourt at Kensington, if not, he would call again in a day or two, and turned his steps homewards. Mabel had perhaps given Harcourt some little rebuff, and he was beginning to find out what a rebuff from her meant to him, that was all. He looked in upon two or three of his people, and then upon Mrs. Mason, the mission woman.

"I am glad you've come, sir," she ejaculated, looking a great deal relieved at sight of him, "for I've got my hands a'most full with this young woman, and I don't know what to think of what she tells me."

"What young woman, Mrs. Mason?"

"Why, the one Amos Bloggs brought, sir. She's in my room, if you wouldn't mind coming in."

He followed her into the neat little parlour, and looked for a moment or two a little questioningly at the figure of a young

girl, who had shrunk back as he entered, then exclaimed, "Lucy May! Why, what brings you here, Lucy?"

The young girl stood blushing and paling beneath his gaze for a moment, then, with a burst of tears, replied: "He brought me, Tuesday."

"He? Bloggs?"

"Yes; and he says he will kill me, if I don't stop here till he comes again; but I don't want to see him, I don't!"

"It seems he took her from another lover, sir," put in Mrs. Mason; "and, from what I can make out, it's a good thing he did take her, though she can't see that it is, poor foolish thing!"

"Just explain to me, Lucy," gravely said Aubyn.

"He was going to marry me the very next morning, he said so;" whimpered Lucy, to whom his having "said so" was quite enough.

"He! Whom do you mean?"

"I wasn't to tell his name till we was married; but Amos Bloggs went on that dreadful, I was obliged to. He's Mr. Harcourt, as was staying at Beechwoods, sir."

"Harcourt! Impossible; quite impossible!"

"I don't know why every one should think it impossible a gentleman should marry me!" tearfully ejaculated Lucy.

"I meant because he is Mr. Harcourt, Lucy," said Aubyn, "and he is the same as engaged to a young lady I know."

"He told me about that, sir," hurriedly said Lucy, "and about his friends wishing him to marry her, because she is rich. But he doesn't want to; he wants to marry me, and Amos Bloggs behaved quite dreadful about it; followed us, and came in the same train, and when we got to London abused Mr. Harcourt shameful, and declared he never meant to marry me, and knocked him down before everybody, and put me into a cab, and brought me here."

"You are safe with Mrs. Mason, at any rate, Lucy. But there is some great mistake—there must be. It could not be the Mr. Harcourt I know!"

"He is Mr. Gerard Harcourt, who has been stopping at Beechwoods, sir."

"Impossible!" repeated Aubyn.

"I don't see why people shouldn't believe me. I never told stories." She hesitated a moment, then, taking from her neck a small gold chain upon which hung a locket hidden beneath her

dress, she offered it for his inspection, saying, with a little attempt at dignity, "This will show. He gave it to me, and there are his initials on it, for any one to see. G. H. to his love L. M."

Aubyn took the locket, and turned away as if for the purpose of examining it in the better light by the window. He was longer about it than seemed necessary, and, when he at length put the locket back into her hand, the grave expression on his face had deepened. As it happened, Lucy was too much absorbed by her own trouble to notice his.

"You know Mr. Harcourt, don't you, sir?"

"I thought I did," was Aubyn's mental ejaculation, as he bent his head.

"And you do not think I would tell you anything that was not true?"

No, he had no reason to suppose she was trying to deceive him; he must try to be just to the poor girl.

"I think you believe that what you say is true, Lucy. But I also think there has been some great mistake." She *must* be mistaken, he said to himself. But, be it what it might, the truth must be brought to light. Suspense would be as unbearable to him as to Lucy. Besides, delay would be unfair to Harcourt. It would be terribly unjust if he were wrongly suspected, and yet this seemed the best to hope for now.

"Have you written to—him, Lucy?"

"I don't know his address, or else I would, sir, and thankful. He must think it such treatment, being attacked like that, and me carried off without being able to say a word to him. Amos Bloggs behaved quite shocking! After beginning by taking Mr. Harcourt aside, and talking to him so quiet and serious, too."

Aubyn reflected a few moments, then came to the conclusion that it might be as well to let her write. It would be the shortest way of proving that she had been mistaken, perhaps, he thought. After another moment's hesitation, he said: "I will give you Mr. Harcourt's address, and you can write to him if you like, Lucy. If you will give her pen and paper, she might write in time for the two o'clock post, Mrs. Mason;" looking at his watch, and then hastily pencilling Harcourt's address upon a card.

"Thank you kindly; yes, sir, I will," readily assented Lucy, to whom anything seemed better than suspense, even the risk of offending her lover by finding out his address, and writing to him there. Mr. Harcourt had been so very particular about

wishing everything kept secret until they were married. "Had I better say——"

"Say just what is in your mind, Lucy. Write entirely from yourself."

Lucy sat down to begin her letter. After saying a few words to Mrs. Mason, who promised him that the letter should be posted at the time he mentioned, Aubyn took his departure.

Two hours later, he again made his appearance at the house in Jermyn Street where Gerard had chambers, determined this time not to be turned from his purpose.

He was again denied admittance.

"I must see Mr. Harcourt, Wright; and I think he is at home."

Wright murmured something about having his orders, and being bound to obey them, looking almost as determined as Aubyn himself, as he stood blocking the way. Those who served Gerard Harcourt, served him well.

"Look here, Wright! I particularly want to see your master, and I will see him; he is in, is he not?"

Wright could not absolutely deny that he was; but admitted it in his own fashion. "I can't exactly say he is out, sir, but my orders were to admit no one, and it's my duty to obey orders."

"Certainly it is. But it will not be your fault if people get in in spite of you. You see I am not like a stranger;" availing himself of a moment's inattention on Wright's part to slip by him, and pass on to the inner door.

"Well, I've obeyed orders; and if you choose to force your way in I'm not answerable, Mr. Aubyn, that's all."

"I will be answerable."

"Then I'm glad you've done it," said Wright, under his breath. "You are not like any one else would be to him, and there's something terribly wrong with the master, and it's quite time some of his friends knew it. He hasn't been a bit like himself since he last left Beechwoods, and it can't be right for him to start off abroad with but a hurried good-bye, just at the last moment, or perhaps not even that; and only means to send one of the letters he's been writing so many of to-day." But, still obedient to orders, Wright left the other to open the dining-room door, and announce himself.

Gerard was seated at a table strewn with letters and papers, apparently busily engaged in writing. He looked up as Aubyn entered the room, and his face grew, if possible, a shade greyer as he said: "You, Aubyn?"

"Why do you shut yourself up in this way, Harcourt?" began Aubyn, striving to speak with his accustomed tone and manner. "This is the third time I have been here before getting in; and Wright was so determinedly on guard to-day, that I had almost to fight my way in."

A slight flush rose to Harcourt's temples. "Wright understands my ways, and—in fact, my time has been so completely taken up just lately with law business, and one thing and another, that I have not been able to attend to anything else. I am thinking of getting away for a time."

"Getting away! From England, do you mean?"

"Yes; they tell me there is good sport still to be had, if one goes far enough."

"Going to leave us all?" Not yet could he mention Mabel's name. "Rather a sudden decision, is it not?"

"Not very; once my mind is made up, I am not slow to act."

Both men were very much unlike themselves, and Aubyn was the least self-possessed of the two. After the first momentary surprise, it seemed like annoyance, Gerard regained the appearance at least of self-control; and, taking note of the evident trouble and anxiety in the other's face, he added: "Are you not well, Aubyn? What's come to you, man?"

"I might very well ask the same of you, Harcourt. You are looking in anything but first-rate condition, yourself."

Gerard's eyes fell, and he muttered something about his detestation of law business; then, with a rather grim attempt at a smile, went on; "And I suppose the Griggs are giving you a little more trouble than usual, just now."

"I—to tell the truth, I do not feel quite myself to-day, and I should like to remain here a short time, if you do not mind."

Gerard wheeled a chair towards him, and, as Aubyn sank into it, looking utterly worn out in mind and body, laid his hand upon the bell.

"No; do not ring. I couldn't take anything just now, indeed. Only let me remain quiet awhile."

Gerard looked at him for a moment, then recognized that it might be as well to give him his way, at any rate for the moment.

"All right, old man. Only remember that the bell is at your elbow, and Wright will get you anything you may feel inclined for," he replied, turning towards the table, and taking up his pen again.

Aubyn sat with downcast eyes and throbbing pulses, silently waiting. Would he presently have to say good-bye to the Gerard Harcourt he had always believed in? Would they never clasp hands in the old hearty way again? Capable of friendship strong and deep, his attachment to Gerard had been of no ordinary kind, and it would cost him not a little pain to say the words that it was possible might have to be spoken. He still tried to persuade himself that all would come right; but he could not altogether ignore facts, and they seemed to tell terribly against Harcourt.

When presently, after a side-glance at the other's face, Gerard lightly gave utterance to a jest, it jarred upon Aubyn as a jest had never before jarred upon him. It was only a few words with reference to the probability of a match coming about between Wright and Soames—a light remark, to the effect that belief in married bliss seemed still to linger amongst the unsophisticated—and a short time previously Aubyn would have scouted the idea of its being in any degree an expression of the other's real sentiments. Now he lost his temper, and made what he felt was a very stupid speech, stiffly replying:

"Be good enough to remember that Dorothy and I belong to the unsophisticated, as you are pleased to call them."

"Oh, yes; I ought to have remembered that, of course, it is no jest to you."

In no mood for bandying jests, Aubyn made no reply; and seeing that he still preferred being left alone, Gerard turned to the table, and occupied himself with his papers again. If Aubyn got a little out of temper occasionally, he soon came round, and would presently be ready enough to make amends.

Aubyn was breathing in short gasps, his eyes turned towards the clock on the mantel-shelf. It was within a minute or so of the time when he had been informed there would be a delivery of letters there. The sound of a bell, and in another minute Wright entered with letters, put them on the table by his master's side, and noiselessly quitted the room.

Aubyn could see that Lucy's letter, with its cramped and crookedly written address, lay with the others, and rose to his feet, keeping one hand on the back of his chair to steady himself, his face grey and drawn, and his eyes turned upon Gerard.

"What ails you, man?" ejaculated Gerard, looking at him in some disquietude. "Why can't you let Wright bring——"

"No, I could take nothing. Read your letters."

"Oh, they will keep. I get enough of them, just now. Nothing of any importance."

"Please to read them."

Harcourt glanced towards him again, and, supposing that all he wanted was to be free from observation until he had quite recovered his self-control, proceeded to turn over the letters. "Ah! Saunders, again. The usual thing, I suppose—got into fresh difficulty with the builders. Afraid of taking responsibility, and awaiting instructions. A good fellow, Saunders, and quite capable of taking the responsibility about these things, if he would only think so. Had no idea that building a few cottages would involve one in all this. One may have a crotchet, without being an absolute idiot in the way of wasting one's money upon—what's scantling, Aubyn?" The latter made no reply, and Gerard musingly went on: "Scantling I can understand; but scantling—bad scantling——"

Was he going to leave Lucy's letter unread? It almost seemed so. He turned over two or three, where they lay upon the table, with a careless hand. But, after a cursory glance, his eyes presently dwelt upon Lucy's letter; and, with a murmured word, the meaning of which Aubyn did not catch, he opened the envelope, and began to read.

The air seemed stifling. Aubyn turned towards the window, and threw it up, his movements unnoticed now by Gerard, pondering over the letter. Suddenly he gave a short laugh.

"My loving Lucy!"

"A letter from—a love letter?" asked Aubyn, in a choking voice.

"Love?" amusedly. "Well, I suppose it is, of its kind. My loving Lucy! Look here, Aubyn, what do you make out of this? What does it all mean?"

Aubyn drew a deep breath of relief; hope springing to his eyes fixed upon Gerard's face as he advanced a step towards him. "Do you really wish me to read it?"

With another short laugh, Gerard put the letter into his hand. "And tell me what it means, if you can."

Aubyn took the letter, and ran his eye over the contents, gathering enough to see that Lucy had written as she might be expected to write—tenderly, effusively, and ungrammatically. She informed her "dear Gerard" that she was "Oh, so unhappy, because you have not wrote. I have been longing and longing to hear from you. And I am so afraid you have been ill, or

something dreadful happened. But, dear Gerard, don't be offended because of that man's rudeness in striking you. I could not help it, and I did not want to go with him, only he made me. But he took me to a nice, kind, motherly woman, who is going to take care of me until you marry me. I have not wrote to mother, though I know she will be dreadfully anxious, because I did not like to tell her I wasn't married yet. So write at once, to your loving Lucy."

"What do you make of it, Aubyn? Who is my loving Lucy? Who was the man that struck me; and what was I doing the while? Who is the nice motherly woman, who is so kindly going to look after my loving Lucy, until we are married? A stupid hoax, do you think, or simply a mistake?"

"It seems earnest enough, but a mistake undoubtedly. She appears to think you have been playing the lover, does she not?"

"Or the villain. It looks like it, certainly. Lucy May? The name seems familiar to me. I feel sure I have heard it somewhere. May? Oh, yes, of course. The young girl Mabel interested herself about at Beechwoods, is she not?"

"Yes, old fellow, I think she is," ejaculated Aubyn, with a beaming face, as he spoke, flinging his arm across the other's shoulder, school-boy fashion.

Gerard smiled; the other was himself again, now. "Yes; this precious epistle was addressed to me by mistake, I suppose—put in the wrong envelope, perhaps. And yet, no; I do not see what it could be intended to take the place of. What could the girl want to be writing about anything to me for? I have not spoken a word to her. I am not sure I have even seen her—unless it was she—to be sure, I begin to understand, now. It was she I saw once or twice with—— The man is worse than I thought him! Yes, I think I can tell you for whom that letter was intended, Aubyn."

"Noel!" exclaimed Aubyn, the truth suddenly bursting upon him. "It does not surprise me."

"My dear Aubyn, I feel quite convinced of it now. I saw him once or twice in the woods, at your place, talking to a pretty looking country girl. The scoundrel has been endeavouring to get her away from her friends."

"Yes; I see it all now! He must have taken your name, to throw her, as well as others, off the scent. She was a new-comer to the place, and did not know him by name. He must

have laid his plans for the express purpose of throwing the blame upon you. To tell the truth, Lucy May herself showed me a locket he had given her, with your and her initials engraved upon it—'G. H. to his love L. M.' Why, he deserves——"

"Come, that's not orthodox, you know, old man"—with a half smile at Aubyn's doubled fists. "You will be a match for him without that—you and the 'rude man' who has already struck a blow in defence of the 'loving Lucy.' Bloggs, is it not?"

Aubyn nodded.

"Well, I must leave all that to you and him, because I shall not—I have other work in hand just now. Between ourselves, I do not feel very great interest in young girls who require so much rescuing; but one is bound to do it for the sake of——" He bowed his head for a moment, in reverence for another in his thoughts, and presently went on: "But there is no time to lose, and I suppose the first step to be taken must be to disillusion the poor 'loving Lucy.'"

"Thank God!"

"Very right and proper of course, my dear Aubyn; but——"

"I have been anything but right, Harcourt. Indeed, I have been so terribly in the wrong, that I don't know how you will be able to look over it. The truth is, facts seemed to tell so strongly against you—there did not appear to be a thread of hope to cling to——"

"And you imagined I could be capable of that kind of thing—you!" with a grave, set face, and slight movement of withdrawal.

"I beg your pardon, Harcourt; I cannot defend myself. But it has nearly knocked me over. I have gone through enough, if you spare me now. I have, indeed!"

Gerard began in fact to understand what it had cost the other to doubt him; and, after a few moments' hesitation, overcame, and held out his hand. "Think no more of it, old man. It would have been worse for me if you had been right, you know."

They gripped hands, with a quiet, steady look into each other's eyes. Nothing could ever come between these two again. But Gerard presently steered away from sentiment.

"I am glad to have shaken hands before I go, old man."

"When are you going, Harcourt; and for how long?" anxiously.

"Oh, I have already written to you. My letter will explain.

I don't like leave-taking, and—in truth, I have so little time for going into things just now, if you will excuse me.”

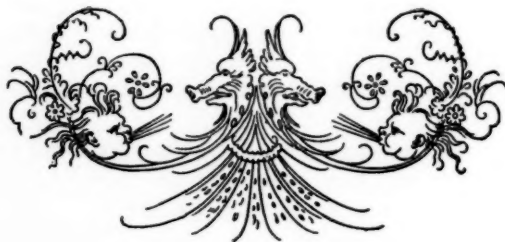
“But you must let me say a word—— If you are going away, there is the more necessity for me to say it. My dear Harcourt, we are very anxious about Mabel, and I wanted just to say a few words——”

“Take my advice, and don't say them. The fact is, there is nothing you could say which either she or I would like to be said. We quite understand each other, and even so good a friend as you could do no good as things are. Take my word for it, Aubyn. Look, here is a letter just ready to be sent to her.”

Not knowing what the contents of the letter might be, Aubyn felt he could venture no more: only murmuring a few words, to the effect that he hoped they really did understand each other, and that Harcourt would not go away until Mabel's reply had reached him.

There was a rather grim smile on Harcourt's lips, with the thought that no reply was asked nor expected. They shook hands once more; and Aubyn took his departure, his mind so wonderfully relieved upon the one point that he could just then think of little else, and the fact was beginning to force itself upon his notice that he had fasted longer than usual. He quickened his steps homewards. He had given up the vicarage—a large, old house—to the curate and his wife; but two rooms were always kept for his use there, when he was in town.

(To be concluded.)



ROSES.

FROM THE FRENCH OF E. PAILLERON.



I AM too early—she is still asleep.
See, I will seat me softly by her bed,
Where dawn hath scarcely lightened round her head,
My watch to keep.

My kisses shall not fret her deep repose ;
Her dream is better than my perfumed gift :
The dawn will watch with me, and pause to lift
Her pinker rose.

O Idler ! with the purple-running veins
Tinted like bloom of lilac under snow,
And breath that is as light to come and go
As summer rains ;

With lips that closed upon a smile last night,
And flower-like cheeks remembering last night's kiss ;
Angels of love may surely look on this
And bless the sight.

Sleep ! I am by you, whispering words of love—
Of love and worship in your closed ear ;
I may say all, because you cannot hear
To disapprove.

As Heaven's joy is mirrored in the lake,
Her golden dreams make brightness on her brow—
Am I a part of them, I wonder now,
For love's dear sake ?

Sleep, happy child, beneath my happy glance.
I would all dreamèd joys were mine and yours,
And day as sweet as such a night assures—
A waking trance.

I bring you all the dearest things I have,
What time has spared, nor envy quite bereft—
What having lived of living still is left,
What hope can save.

All that is truest which the world derides,
The gift of loving and the worth of life,
The strength of faith, the holiness of strife—
My tears besides.

I give you all, at once, and in one hour,
Much and so little, strong and yet so weak;
My lady will not let the casket break,
Nor crush the flower.

Let us lie low and hide our happiness,
That sorrow may not hear us on her way,
Or seeing, think, "It is too small to slay
Or to make less."

The miser in the dark immures his gold,
Leaves hide the flowers, birds conceal their nest;
Let sacred love be quiet, as is best,
Not over-bold.

But if our care is vain; if sorrow come
And knock upon our door, you shall not know:
I will go out alone to meet the blow—
If sorrow come!

I will keep all things from you, even doubt;
You shall unconscious tread life's sunny road,
Not guessing it is I that bear the load,
And weep without.

From height to height your untrammelled feet shall cross;
You shall go smiling on towards the goal,
Not knowing you attained the perfect whole
Out of my loss.

But now my soul is rich; if Fate opposes
He must grow weary e'er he rob my store.
Awake, my love! The dawn is at your door,
And I bring roses.

DOROTHEA A. ALEXANDER.

"TOUT CELA POUR BIBI!"

(BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.)

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THE miserable end of Boulanger, once so popular, whose career might have been so brilliant, cannot be passed over without notice, although the painful details are of a nature on which it is scarcely possible to dwell. There is something so awful in the deliberate suicide of a husband and father on the very grave of the woman who had destroyed the peace of his home, that the folly of the act, with its theatrical surroundings, is lost in the horror of the responsibility incurred ; an act only to be excused in the delirium of passion ascribed to a boyish Romeo, and now committed by a man of fifty-four years of age, a husband, a father, even a grandfather! And with what deliberation! Can it be believed that the romantic motive was the real one?

In Paris incredulity prevails, and the common impression is that the man was run to earth, that he had lost all he cared for, that he foresaw even inextricable money difficulties, increased by the death of the woman for whom he had staked and forfeited his position ; he knew that his military career was ended, that he had missed an opportunity never to be regained. After the excitement of the past, he could not look forward patiently to a quiet home, with its common-place duties. His friends and adherents, meanwhile, had gradually fallen off ; he felt that all his hopes were annihilated, and that a desolate, profitless life was before him. He then determined, with his characteristic love of effect, to end his days in such fashion as to recall his almost forgotten name to all memories.

Such an explanation seems the most rational. Boulanger was not a man of superior intellect ; he was only the sharp and polished tool of others, cleverer than he was himself. He was a good officer, and no more ; he knew how to command, with a judicious mixture of authority and good-nature, which induced

willing obedience, but, according to the testimony of his comrades, he had no real military talent, and it was perhaps fortunate for his reputation that his ability was never put to any vital test. He obtained rapid promotion, chiefly because he was favoured by the retirement or decease of those immediately above him, also by a spirit of intrigue and flattery, which worked its way. The real value of his professed gratitude for patronage was, however, fully demonstrated by his conduct to the Duc d'Aumale, to whom he had written even servile letters of thanks, which he afterwards boldly denied, claiming his promotion to be due solely to his own merits. From the time of his boyhood he was said to be untruthful, and later on he never shrank from a falsehood when it could serve his purpose. No principle ever stood in his way when any goal had to be reached. In every detail he was a charlatan, who incessantly had recourse to newspaper puffing, that his name might be kept before the public.

As Minister of War he chiefly sought popularity in the ranks; he was kind to privates, but overbearing with the officers, who generally disliked him, and spoke disparagingly of his supposed military capacity. He certainly improved the position of the soldiers; but the officers, especially those belonging to aristocratic families, were persistently subjected to petty annoyances, on pretence of their antagonistic political opinions. All acknowledged, nevertheless, that when he chose to salve over the wounds inflicted on their pride, his graceful *bonhomie* and seductive manners were irresistible. "C'est un charmeur," was often admitted.

Boulanger knew that the French are strongly impressed by externals; his fine face and figure, his prancing black horse and military demeanour, were consequently turned to account, and soon won the favour of the crowd, who took for granted that the "brav' Général" was all that he seemed to be. His innovations were often cleverly chosen for public effect, such, for instance, as the military salute to the flag, which previously was bent before the commanding officer. Boulanger changed this custom; the flag is now supreme, and the officer in command salutes it with his sword, the effect of which is certainly very impressive.

As Boulanger made incessant changes, and found fault with all preceding regulations, he was supposed to know better than all his predecessors. The hope was consequently awakened that here was a rising hero, who would lead the French to victory and wipe out the stain of defeat. He was called "le Général La



Revanche," and it was whispered that he would restore Alsace and Lorraine to France :

"Rends-nous, rends-nous, l'Alsace et la Lorraine!"

and the people began to cry "Vive Boulanger!" to the stirring music of patriotic songs. He was essentially vain-glorious, and his not over-strong brain became intoxicated with sudden popularity, while the more acute minds of intriguing politicians saw the use that could be made of such a man. They burrowed in the dark, while Boulanger pranced on his black steed and bowed to the admiring populace. Silly women of fashion courted his presence in their homes, and ladies of the highest rank wore his emblematic carnations in public, even set in jewels.

Then came the fall of the Cabinet and the so-called "exile" of Boulanger in Auvergne, where it was hoped that he would be forgotten. The extraordinary scene at the Lyons railway station was a startling revelation of the position he had gained in the sight of a populace, insidiously worked up by his supporters. But here they "proved too much"; for Boulanger, whose bravery was undeniable on the battle-field, shrank with disgust from such contact with the mob. Ever afterwards he tried to escape from their too affectionate demonstrations, only enduring them when unavoidable, and with evident dislike. No man ever had to encounter a larger dose of inconvenient popularity. Wherever he went, the cry of "Vive Boulanger!" was raised, and became a roar; so that when a crowd was seen at a distance and noise was heard, it was easy to foresee what would be the answer to enquiry: "C'est Boulanger qui passe!" often with the accompaniment of a contemptuous shrug and the comment: "Sont-ils bêtes?" Some such flattering remark was made by a good lady who kept a shoemaker's shop, and who expressed her very sensible view of the matter to Boulanger himself, driven to take refuge within her walls. Never dreaming that she was sheltering the great man in person, she opened a back door leading to another street, condoling with him meanwhile on his unfortunate and inconvenient likeness to Boulanger, which had caused such a troublesome mistake!

When safely shielded from personal contact with his admirers, as on the night of his election as Deputy, when he watched the crowd on the Boulevards from the windows of the Café Durand, he was amused and delighted with the popular enthusiasm, exclaiming in childish glee: "Tout cela pour Bibi!"—applying

the pet name to himself in no very dignified manner. The trifling circumstance reveals the whole character of the man. We can scarcely imagine the Great Napoleon alluding to himself as "Bibi." On one of the many occasions when Napoleon the Third was surrounded by a seemingly delirious crowd surging round his carriage and shouting "Vive l'Empereur!" as vehemently as they afterwards cried "Vive Boulanger!" the Count de Tascher la Pagerie, who attended the Emperor, was surprised at the grave indifference with which he raised his hat in response.

"Mais, Sire, vous ne semblez éprouver aucune satisfaction?"

"C'est que je connais les hommes, Tascher," was the almost mournful reply.

Boulanger did not know mankind.

On that night, if he had possessed the ready decision and strong determination which characterizes really great men, he would have been the master of France, for the reins were ready to be grasped by a firm hand, guided by a stronger brain than was, alas! that of poor "Bibi!" A triumphant entry into the Elysée seemed so obviously the thing to be done, that no less a personage than Constans himself went there, fully expecting to witness the event. When he found that Boulanger did not come, he turned away with a sort of contemptuous satisfaction, saying, in more energetic than elegant French, the equivalent of, "It is all up with him!" And meanwhile "Bibi" laughed with his friends, making great plans for the future.

When that future came, and he had again the game in his hands—when his supporters had prepared everything for an insurrection and a *coup d'Etat*, when the Government strained every nerve to meet the coming struggle, with its doubtful results—suddenly, like a thunderbolt, came the wonderful news that Boulanger had fled—and not alone.

No one at first could believe the report—indignantly denied by his friends. But where was he? Why did he not come forward? At last the humiliating truth could no longer be concealed; the sham Samson had followed Delilah. From that day, like his prototype, his power was gone. The military commander, the politician, had disappeared. The man now sought only the luxuries of life, as if he had inexhaustible wealth at his command; and yet it was well known that he had no private means. The Parisian *gamins*, with their well-known slang, archly enquired, in satirical songs—

"Dis-donc, Ernest, où c'qu'est ton Pactole?"

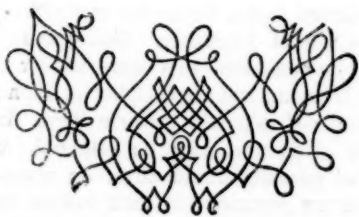
The answer to these troublesome questions was plain enough when the disgraceful intrigues with the Orléanists were revealed, and the thousands lavished by the Duchesse d'Uzès were enumerated. There was a general outcry, but the conspirator seemed now to have only one idea and one aim left. "*Marguerite, vivante ou morte, je ne vous abandonnerai jamais*"—and such constancy, in one so proverbially inconstant, was the strangest feature in the case.

Then came his downfall. The visits of his friends were less and less frequent—silence and solitude, instead of admiring crowds, and a dying woman as his only companion.

"*Dieu l'a jugé—silence !*"

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NOTE.—In 'MURRAY'S MAGAZINE' for August, a remark occurred in the article entitled "Great Steamship Lines, No. VI." which does injustice to the S.S. *Austral*, belonging to the Orient Steam Navigation Company, Limited. The Directors of the Company point out "That the *Austral* in November, 1882, was being coaled in Sydney Harbour on a fine night. The coal was put into the steamer through her coal-ports, and, owing to gross negligence on the part of those in charge, the ship was allowed to list, and consequently sank. She did not, as stated in the article, 'turn turtle,' nor had the question of her beam anything to do with it."



## CORRESPONDENCE.—THE SITE OF CALVARY.

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TO THE EDITOR OF 'MURRAY'S MAGAZINE.'

SIR,

Many good people, and these by no means fanatics, are doubtless feeling perplexed and sad at the persistent assaults directed against the traditional Holy Places, and in particular against Calvary. What are the facts concerning the latter?

About a generation ago an American traveller, strolling around Jerusalem, thought he observed, in a cave-faced hillock that lies just outside the Damascus gate, a resemblance to a skull. Lightly setting the centuries aside—the thousand years of use and wont before America's day—he hailed the sudden inspiration, and pronounced the spot the genuine Calvary. The snowball thus casually started has been so diligently rolled that, for some time past, the traditional locality has been getting generally discredited in the eyes of ordinary travellers—so much so that many leave the Holy City without deigning even to enter the Church of the Sepulchre. And now the theory is being set forth so confidently among ourselves, that some religious papers are fain to accept it, in a spirit of reluctant resignation, as final. It remains, however, to be said that there are those who have wandered among the Holy Places as industriously as any of the innovators, with no less enthusiasm and probably no less intelligence, and who still contend that not one of the arguments advanced in favour of the American theory but might with equal force be made to do duty in behalf of the traditional view.

We would seem to be growing reckless in our suggestions. Take, for instance, the latest of a distinguished Professor. In the first volume of a really valuable work—of which he is editor—he starts the grotesque if not gruesome theory that Mary's Well and the Pool of Siloam, both of them on the east, are none other than the two Pools of Gihon—always hitherto believed to be, where any one with eyes may see them to-day, on the west side of Jerusalem. Going thus far, he feels compelled, in order to be consistent, to assume further that the Tyropean Valley is the real Hinnom, and that Ophel is Zion! His colleagues assuredly would smile if asked to endorse these daring assumptions. And so a measure of comfort may be gathered, after all, from the situation: such wild guessing would never be resorted to were it not that those who do it are persuaded in their inmost hearts that positive certainty on these points is not to be hoped for. In the circumstances tradition has a perfect right to say, "The old is better."

J. KEAN.